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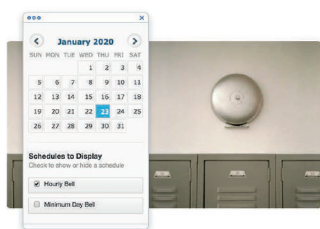
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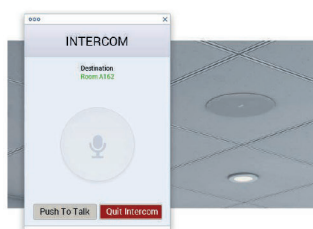
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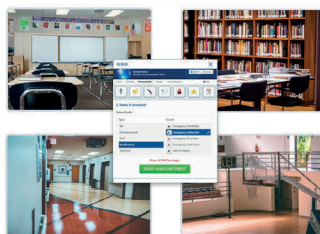
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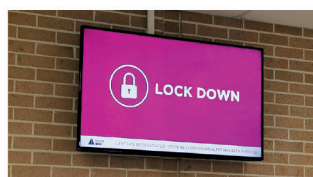
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Rooted in the Canadian education experience and perspective, our English and French articles provide voice to teachers, principals, superintendents and researchers – a growing network of experts who examine today's school and classroom challenges with courage and honesty. Pragmatic, accessible and evidence-based, *Education Canada* connects policy and research to classroom practice.

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BY HOLLY BENNETT



PAR GILBERTE GODIN

Are the Kids All Right?

IF YOU ARE A REGULAR FOLLOWER of *Education Canada*, you'll know that the well-being of teachers and staff is one of our core concerns. We've had two recent issues focused on staff well-being, and our Well at Work department runs every issue. This is just a part of the EdCan Network's ongoing Well at Work/*Bien dans mon travail* initiative, which is supporting education leaders across Canada to develop and implement strategies to improve K-12 workplace well-being for the long term.

In this issue, we turn the well-being lens on students. How are they faring after this difficult and unsettling time? What supports will they need as they return to school? What can be done – at every level of the system – to create healthier, happier school cultures?

Comprehensive School Health (CSH) is an integrated approach that promotes health and wellness throughout the school community, and from the policy level to that of the individual classroom. Check out “Leveraging Pandemic Lessons to Heal,” (p. 16), by Shelly Russell-Mayhew and Kerri Murray, for an introduction to this framework. They point out that our response to the pandemic demonstrated the effectiveness of CSH in a physical health context. Now, they say, it is time to apply the same framework to schoolwide well-being. Kaitlyn Bailey (“Making the Healthy Choice the Easy Choice,” p. 26) shows how this looks in one classroom, in a district where social and emotional learning has been given a strong focus.

And there's much more to read. LJ Slovin shares ways to help gender-nonconforming students feel more comfortable, safe and welcome in school (p. 21). Lauren McNamara and Tracy Vaillancourt (p. 13) argue that the pandemic created a “play loss” that is just as serious a concern as “learning loss,” and that more, and better, recess time is needed to support student well-being and engagement. Louis Volante and colleagues (p. 32) point to recent research revealing that up to 70 percent of children and adolescents “experienced deterioration in at least one of six mental health domains during the COVID-19 pandemic,” and suggest that tracking and addressing student well-being and resilience has become a new imperative.

We've packed a lot into this magazine and the web-exclusive articles that accompany it. For our November “issue” we have an exciting new project to present. Read more about it in “Network Voices” (p. 6) – and please do join us in November for the launch! **EC**

Write to us!

We want to know what you think. Send your comments to editor@edcan.ca – or join the conversation by using **#EdCan** on Twitter and Facebook.

Comment vont nos élèves?

CETTE QUESTION qui était déjà très présente dans nos salles de classe avant la pandémie a pris une place de grande importance. Combien de fois les élèves entendent-ils : « Ça va bien aujourd'hui? », question que j'ai moi-même posée des centaines, voire des milliers de fois aux élèves tout au long de ma carrière. Dans le système scolaire, nous ne savons pas toujours que faire de l'élève qui répond : « Non, pas vraiment? » Et l'élève le sait. Ainsi, de sa perspective, il semble plus simple de répondre « Oui, ça va bien » ou encore, au secondaire, de parfois répliquer par un faible haussement d'épaules, le regard plongé dans un iPhone. Plus simple, mais à quel prix?

On peut se demander : comment évaluer le niveau de bien-être d'un enfant ou d'un adolescent? Son sourire, son enthousiasme, sa posture, son attitude, son rendement scolaire, sa vision de l'avenir?

Est-ce que parfois le système, hyper organisé autour d'horaires, d'ateliers, d'activités, de tâches, de consignes, d'évaluations, de bulletins... ne taxe-t-il pas le bien-être des élèves? Le rythme et la nature des activités scolaires se prêtent-ils à l'écoute des besoins des élèves, considérant que chacun a un rythme et des besoins qui lui sont propres? Advenant que le personnel enseignant, qui a aussi un rythme et des besoins qui lui sont propres (voir le numéro de *Éducation Canada*, Vol. 59, No 4) soit outillé pour faire une lecture efficace des besoins des élèves. Quoi après? Pourra-t-il empêcher les cloches qui en stressent certains et certaines de sonner, pourra-t-il éliminer les concours et les évaluations qui en stressent d'autres et qui peuvent miner leur motivation? Aura-t-il la latitude d'accorder plus de temps aux élèves qui en réclament et faire vivre les journées autrement aux élèves?

Dans ce numéro, plusieurs auteurs et autrices se penchent spécifiquement sur la question du bien-être des élèves. En fait, nous avons notamment droit en primeur à une étude de Marion Deslandres Martineau, Patrick Charland et leur équipe (p. 52) qui présentent leurs résultats préliminaires et quelques recommandations sur les effets de la COVID sur le bien-être, l'anxiété et la motivation des élèves. Pour sa part, Marie-Andrée Pelletier (p. 40) s'attarde aux bien-être des tout-petits par le biais des compétences sociales et émotionnelles du personnel enseignant, tandis que Vicky-Anne Fournier-Gallant (p. 43) aborde la délicate, mais combien nécessaire question des élèves qui vivent des situations d'agressions sexuelles.

La question « Comment vont nos élèves » ouvre la voie à de nombreuses autres questions auxquelles cette ère de renouveau nous encourage à répondre par l'action. **EC**

Écrivez-nous!

Envoyez vos commentaires à redaction@edcan.ca.

Joignez-vous à la conversation en utilisant le **#EdCan** sur Twitter et Facebook.

BY / PAR STEPHEN HURLEY



Stephen Hurley

has been working in Canada's education space for 35 years, serving as a classroom teacher, curriculum consultant and teacher educator. Stephen is passionate about supporting and nurturing new conversations about education across the country. He is the chief catalyst behind **voicEd Radio** (<http://voiced.ca>) – a 24/7 radio station dedicated to deepening the way we talk about education in Canada.



Stephen Hurley évolue dans le milieu de l'éducation au Canada depuis 35 ans, tant comme enseignant, consultant en matière de programmes et formateur. Il a à cœur de soutenir et d'alimenter de nouveaux dialogues sur l'éducation partout au pays. Il est le moteur derrière **voicEd Radio** (<http://voiced.ca>) – une station qui diffuse en continu du contenu relatif à l'éducation au Canada.



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EDUCATION CANADA: Reimagined

Building a deeper, research-inspired conversation

The **EdCan Network** and **voicEd Radio Canada** are joining forces to launch a new content format in November that gathers the voices of researchers, educators and policy thinkers together in lively and informative conversations, articles and professional learning resources that will help you explore some of the most pressing questions in Canadian education.

There's no doubt that there have always been vibrant conversations happening around staff-room tables, in coffee shops or in conference centre ballrooms, whether it's the latest research on assessment, a new approach to engaging students, or emerging research-informed practices for early learning.

In recent years, the advent of powerful social media platforms, blogs, and podcasts have expanded *what* we are able to talk about and *who* is able to do that talking. It's a great thing for strong public dialogue, but it can sometimes be difficult to know how to navigate available content and connect with the ideas and perspectives that are going to have the greatest impact on teaching and learning right now.

In our new format, *Education Canada* will explore emerging issues that matter to you as professionals and are important for advancing our education systems, starting with the essential question:

How will we teach in a (post)-pandemic Canada?

ÉDUCATION CANADA : Le réseau repensé

Pour une conversation approfondie, inspirée de la recherche

Le **Réseau ÉdCan** et **voicEd Radio Canada** unissent leurs forces et lanceront, en novembre, un nouveau format de contenu qui regroupera des chercheurs, des éducateurs et des décideurs; des conversations informatives, des articles et des ressources d'apprentissage professionnel vous aideront à explorer certaines des grandes questions du secteur de l'éducation au Canada.

Il ne fait aucun doute que les conversations ont toujours été animées dans les salons du personnel, les cafés et les centres de congrès, que ce soit au sujet de la plus récente étude sur l'évaluation, d'une nouvelle façon de stimuler les élèves ou de nouvelles pratiques découlant de la recherche en apprentissage des jeunes enfants.

Depuis quelques années, l'émergence de plateformes de médias sociaux, de blogues et de balados a élargi les sujets de conversation et permis à plus de personnes de participer au dialogue. Cela contribue certes à la vigueur du dialogue public, mais il peut parfois être difficile de s'y retrouver en termes de contenu et de prendre connaissance des idées et points de vue qui auront la plus grande incidence sur l'enseignement et l'apprentissage.

Dans le nouveau format, *Éducation Canada* explorera de nouveaux enjeux qui vous tiennent à cœur comme professionnels, et qui sont importants pour l'avancement de nos systèmes d'éducation, à commencer par la question essentielle :

We've invited researchers working in the areas of equity and inclusion, technology, Indigenous education, and even philosophy to offer their unique perspectives on the question. You'll get to hear their voices in a dedicated *Education Canada* podcast, and read their magazine articles on the EdCan website. But it doesn't end there. We'll also be inviting the voicEd Radio podcast community to reflect on the question in one of their podcast episodes. And to open up the conversation even further, we'll be bringing researchers, educators and policy voices together in a special panel discussion designed to ask some important "So what? Now What? questions.

So, why is this an important shift for *Education Canada*? We know that there has always been a gap between academic research and professional practice. We also know that there is an increasing demand for research that impacts practice *and* for what happens in schools and classrooms to inform research initiatives. Finally, we know that policy looks to both the academy and the classroom for insight and direction. In our new format, we're intentionally bringing research, practice and policy voices together in a vibrant dynamic that we know will be useful, engaging and impactful.

Welcome to a newly imagined *Education Canada*, powered by voicEd Radio and energized by the diversity of voices in Canadian education – including yours. **ÉC**

Comment enseignerons-nous dans un Canada (post) pandémique?

Nous avons invité des chercheurs dans les domaines de l'équité et de l'inclusion, des technologies, de l'éducation autochtone et même de la philosophie à donner leurs points de vue sur la question. Vous pourrez les entendre dans un balado d'*Éducation Canada* et lire leurs articles sur le site Web d'EdCan. Mais ce n'est pas tout. Nous inviterons la communauté du balado voicEd Radio à réfléchir à la question dans l'un des épisodes. Et pour alimenter davantage la conversation, nous convierons des chercheurs, des éducateurs et des décideurs à une discussion spéciale où d'importantes questions seront soulevées sur la suite des choses.

Pourquoi, ce virage est-il important pour *Éducation Canada*? Nous savons qu'il y a toujours eu un fossé entre la recherche universitaire et la pratique professionnelle. Nous savons également qu'il y a une demande accrue pour des projets de recherche qui influencent la pratique **et** pour que les expériences dans les écoles contribuent aux projets de recherche. Enfin, nous savons que les décideurs cherchent de l'orientation et de l'information autant auprès des chercheurs que des professionnels de la classe. Avec notre nouveau format, nous réunissons intentionnellement les chercheurs, les professionnels et les décideurs pour créer des interactions dynamiques qui ne manqueront pas d'être utiles, inspirantes et percutantes.

Bienvenue à un *Éducation Canada* repensé, soutenu par voicEd Radio et mû par la diversité des voix du réseau canadien de l'éducation – dont la vôtre. **ÉC**

Workplace Strategies for Mental Health

Stratégies en milieu de travail sur la santé mentale

Want to build resilience and minimize stressors for post-secondary students?

Vous souhaitez aider les étudiants du postsecondaire à renforcer leur résilience et à diminuer les facteurs de stress?

From *Surviving to Thriving*, a free post-secondary student resilience resource, gives evidence-based tools to help you facilitate this online or in person.

Dans le cadre du programme *De la survie à la réussite*, une ressource gratuite pour favoriser la résilience des étudiants du postsecondaire, on vous propose des outils pour vous aider à présenter le programme en ligne ou en personne.

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All Workplace Strategies resources are available to anyone at no cost, compliments of Canada Life. | Toutes les ressources du site *Stratégies en milieu de travail* sont accessibles à tous, sans frais, gracieuseté de la Canada Vie.

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promising practices

BY MEREDITH VERMA AND JAMES SPEIDEL



PHOTO: COURTESY JAMES SPEIDEL

CSP after-school programs include field trips to extend students' education and experience.

After-School Programs

Keeping children healthy, connected, and safe

Meredith Verma is Manager of Community Schools Partnership and Middle School co-lead in Surrey Schools, B.C. She works to promote and support justice, care, and equity as a continuing learner and leader, and is part of the district SOGI committee, Healthy School Communities, and Compassion Leadership Committee.

James Speidel is Assistant Manager of Community Schools Partnership (CSP), Surrey Schools, B.C. James has been with CSP for seven years and has helped lead the department to develop after-school programming for various schools in the district.

THE LIGHTS ARE LOW and peaceful in the school gymnasium. Around the floor, tiny pink and purple yoga mats are splayed in a large circle, six feet apart. The Community Schools Partnership facilitator sits in the centre. "This is how you breathe mindfully. Sit with your heart up and take a deep breath in and empty all of the worries from your day." The students in her program adore her. She is the reason some students come to school each day during a pandemic. They feel the safe, caring space and it shows.

Who are we?

Community Schools Partnership (CSP) is a department that complements educational programs in Surrey Schools. Our work is to provide before-, during-, and after-school programs with a focus on sports, arts, STEM, and social-emotional learning (SEL) opportunities. CSP's goals are aligned with the district's goals to ensure equity and access for all children to reach their full potential, expand their learning, and grow socially and emotionally. Our programs are shaped around the needs of the school community. We focus on programs and partnership development in areas like physical literacy, art, music, STEM, coding, yoga, dance, and many other extra activities. It is in these programs that CSP Outreach staff have the opportunity to support children and youth who may not have access to fun physical and emotional supports that help them thrive.

Community Schools Partnership is funded through multiple streams provincially, locally, and federally. Our primary funding is through the Community Link Funding, which is intended to target students with complexities who need the additional supports in schools to thrive. Some of those complexities include financial and accessibility barriers.

Throughout the pandemic, our small but mighty department pivoted and flexed in ways we never knew were possible to ensure that after-school programs

continued. In British Columbia, schools remained open throughout the pandemic. Our team continued to implement programs by following the guidelines from the Provincial Health Authority and our school district's Health and Safety team. Some of the key measures we put in place included: shortening program time, lowering numbers of students in programs, keeping students in their learning cohorts (not mixing cohorts), and communicating clear guidelines for keeping our students and school communities safe.

Why after-school programs matter

After-school programs have always made a difference for kids. They became even more important during the pandemic, when students were on blended learning programs that limited their ability to see friends face to face. Our CSP Outreach Workers and Facilitators worked hard to continue to meet the needs of our students and bring them back to safety, security, and normalcy. One of our Outreach staff, Vanessa, related that "many kids want to learn friendship skills, especially given the circumstances where they are forced to stay at home for extended periods."

At a time when the mental health and well-being of young people have been clearly impacted, intentional programming that effectively responds to the needs of students will support their recovery as we move into our "new normal."

Community Schools Partnership programs foster an atmosphere of safety and wrap-around support. They are not separate from the school culture; rather they echo the values and learning throughout the school day and contribute to a school culture that is healthy and robust. Jordan, one of our outreach workers, says, "In our after-school programs, everyone feels accepted and valued. We create opportunities for team building and bringing everyone closer to our common goals." CSP's after-school programs provide an intentional space to extend students' learning and belonging. Student participants feel more connected to the school because they belong to the programs. Group leader Meghan names additional benefits: "Social-emotional learning, social connections after school, physical literacy, and community empowerment."

Results of the program evaluation

Through the pandemic, we felt it was increasingly important to know where our students were at, socially and emotionally. We collaborated with our research department to create a survey based on some key pillars that reflect the students' perception of how they are doing.

We evaluated students in nine different CSP after-school programs. Data was collected from 617 program participants ages six to 12, attending these programs across Surrey Schools. Program participants were asked to complete a 25-item survey, broadly grouped into

five domains using a five-point Likert Scale. Program participants responded to survey items by indicating their level of agreement: 1) Disagree a lot; 2) Disagree a little; 3) Don't agree or disagree; 4) Agree a little; and 5) Agree a lot. Additional open-ended questions were posed to program participants.

What we learned through this process was that students who attend CSP after-school programs tend to report higher feelings of attachment and after-school involvement, and to feel a deeper sense of awareness of their thoughts and feelings, than is reported by the overall school population of B.C. in the provincial Middle Years Development Instrument (MDI) survey (see Figure 1). These are early findings, but showcase the importance of after-school programming.

Figure 1: Participant Responses Overall by Domain

Overall Program Scores	Connected-ness	Physical Health and Well-Being	School Experiences	Social and Emotional Wellness	Overall
CSP TOTALS	82%	76%	82%	77.5%	79.5%
MDI TOTALS	67.3%	67%	74.6%	58.4%	69.3%

CSP = Community Schools Partnership programs

MDI = The Middle Years Development Instrument, used in B.C. for Grades 4-8.

Note: The CSP survey questions have been adapted from the MDI, and while some of the questions are the same as MDI, others have been changed slightly to make answering the questions easier for children in programs Grade 1 to 3.

Teaching where they are at

We have been fortunate to be able to run after-school programs for students despite the pandemic. The strain that the pandemic has added to the lives of students has amplified the urgency for us to continue to effectively address the areas of mental health and SEL in our youth. Jordynn, one of our outreach staff, says, "Teaching mental health literacy in our after-school programs has been integral... mindfulness, awareness, and fostering social interactions have been lacking throughout this pandemic." The opportunity for healthy interactions and rediscovering that place of quiet and calm can offer a much-needed respite for our youth, some of whom may find that the only space for them to practise mindfulness is in their after-school programs.

Consistently listening to the voices, opinions, and insights of our students is essential in creating programs that truly meet their needs. The more we listen, hear, and apply their considerations and make any necessary adaptations to our programs, the more we reach students where they are at and build their trust. We are always listening to them.

At the beginning of the article, our students were finding peace in their after-school program. In the final moments of this program, each student takes a long deep breath in and out. Then they roll up their little yoga mats, and the outreach worker checks in with each student as they make their way to the yoga mat bin. One student says casually on the way out, "I can teach this to my mom. Sometimes she gets stressed too, this could help her," and runs to catch up with her mom waiting outside. This captures why we do what we do. The pressure that the pandemic is placing on our families and society is significant; however with supports and programming, we adapt. CSP after-school programs encourage children to express and accept their feelings, to embrace challenges, and to build up their resiliency toolboxes. **EC**

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ILLUSTRATION: ADOBE STOCK

The Pandemic of Educator Stress

Actions, steps, and strategies to combat caregiver burnout this school year

Danna Thomas is the 2019 Johns Hopkins Social Innovation Lab Winner and a former Baltimore City Public School teacher turned founder of a global initiative to support the mental health and wellness of educators. Her organization, Happy Teacher Revolution, is on a mission to increase teacher happiness, retention, and professional sustainability by providing educators with the time and space to feel, deal, and be real about the social and emotional demands they face on the job.

CONSIDER YOUR OWN personal journey in the world of education. When you began your story, were there any classes that covered how to grapple with teaching and leading during a global pandemic? Did your coursework provide opportunities to learn how to educate students during a worldwide crisis? Did any of your mentor teachers give you a heads-up about how to completely transform your life from in-person instruction to teaching completely online in just a few days?

The truth of the matter is, educators have been grappling with an ever-present demand to be flexible, to think on our feet, and to pivot at a moment's notice. We are accustomed to feelings of uncertainty while simultaneously putting on a brave face as we continue to show up day in and day out. Long before the COVID-19 pandemic, teachers were tasked with supporting students in the midst of the most seemingly insurmountable obstacles. And, long before the COVID-19 pandemic, there was an educator burnout pandemic.

We know that stress and burnout are not new phenomena to educators, but unfortunately they're getting worse. According to research, teachers are dealing with increasing demands, lack of resources, and limited autonomy. And their leaders are grappling with burnout, too.

Principals struggle with increased workload, the pressures of 24/7 online access, and the growing diversity of student and staff needs. When teacher burnout increases, teaching quality decreases, which results in less effective classroom management and reduced

student engagement. When teacher stress increases, it contributes to student stress, which has been linked to learning and mental health problems.

I've recognized this issue as an educator for Baltimore City Public Schools, but before becoming a teacher, as a student in crisis, I learned the importance of supporting mental health and well-being. In both high school and college, I suffered from crippling depression, anxiety, and panic attacks. I represented the one in four Americans who has grappled with a mental illness and the one in ten college students who have contemplated suicide. My teachers were my emotional first responders who noticed the subtle changes in my behaviour, encouraged me to seek treatment and get help, and supported me with life-saving accommodations and differentiation. They are the reason I am alive and writing this today. They were my inspiration to become a teacher myself.

It was as a teacher that I realized the complete lack of preparedness and ongoing support for the emotional demands of the profession – and specifically, for working with children who have experienced trauma or are experiencing ongoing trauma first-hand.

Because of the lack of resources and support around self-care and mental health in the workplace for adult staff, I left the classroom after nearly a decade to start an organization aiming to revolutionize workplace well-being, called Happy Teacher Revolution. (See Happy Teacher Revolution.) I am by no means an expert about how to perfectly master the elusive work-life balance, as I am learning right alongside you as we embark on the next school year together, but I want you to know that this is an opportunity for us to collectively make change by prioritizing our own well-being as a best practice for those we serve. Below you will find my top eight strategies for revolutionizing your own wellness this school year. I hope you take the time to try out one of the action steps I've suggested – or create your own and share it with us!

1. Acknowledge that prioritizing YOU is a radical act of personal development.

The first step in prioritizing your well-being this school year is to know that just reading this, and making the intention to fill your cup first instead of pouring from an empty vessel, is an action that you have already taken. So, go YOU! This act of personal development is radical and disruptive in a *good* way because it is the means to your own professional sustainability. Some ways you might choose *you* this year are by setting boundaries, saying “no” or “I’ll think about it” instead of an automatic “yes,” or creating more opportunities to spend time enjoying the things you love.

2. The mute button isn't just for Zoom.

This strategy comes from fellow Baltimore City Public School educator and advocate for teacher well-being

Better hearing for better learning

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LaQuisha Hall. Identify toxic forces that need to be “muted” in your life. Know that these influences may be rearing their ugly heads after you initiate boundaries like I’ve suggested above... but know that the people who will be pushing back on your boundaries are probably the same people who took advantage of your lack of boundaries to begin with.

3. Identify your purpose.

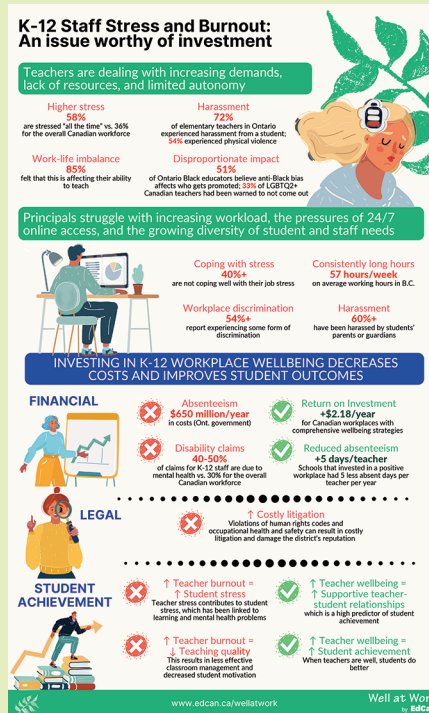
This strategy is one that applies to all of us: whether you are an aspiring educator, a brand-new educator, or you’ve been in the game for decades. Fascinatingly, it doesn’t matter if you’re older versus younger, or if you have a chronic condition or disease, feeling that you have a sense of purpose in life may help you live longer, according to research published in *Psychological Science* (2014), a journal of the Association for Psychology Science. Research shows that having a purpose in life is a best practice no matter one’s age, and a powerful strategy we could model to our students.

4. Create a self-care action plan.

One of our Revolutionary educators in Alabama, Benita Moyers, suggests creating a self-care action plan. Just as you create intentional plans for your students, consider what it could look like to implement a time every week to pour into your own cup, so that you can continue supporting your students and the community of individuals surrounding you. Carve out a time in your schedule to spend time on YOU. Actually put it into your calendar so that it will happen. Put in a reminder. Even if it feels indulgent to spend time on yourself, recognize that self-care isn’t selfish; self-care is professional development.

5. Offer yourself pre-forgiveness.

This inspired practice comes from one of our very first Happy Teacher Revolution pilot sites and trauma-informed schools in Nashville. To pre-forgive is to acknowledge that you will probably make mistakes and to be prepared to forgive yourself when things don’t go absolutely perfectly. This strategy is the opportunity to be gentle with yourself, just as you would be gentle with any friend or student who could benefit from a nurturing/encouraging sentiment rather than an accusatory one. Acknowledge that the pandemic of COVID-19 was something we could have never expected or “practised” for. Offer



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yourself pre-forgiveness and self-compassion around the immense amount of change that upended our lives over the last few years. Give yourself the space to grieve the losses, the changes, the ways that our lives will forever be different. Acknowledge that you will continue to make mistakes as you set one foot in front of the other. Pre-forgiveness is knowing that the road may still be bumpy in life post-COVID, and recognizing that the healing process is never linear.

6. Take breaks.

An accommodation that teachers often make for their students is to provide them with opportunities to take frequent breaks. This applies to us, too. Take time to disconnect and detach with love. Unplug from technology and the demand to be “available” all of the time. Put up an auto-response that you are currently unavailable. Go outside in nature. Move your body and take a moment to let your mind rest and digest the stimulation of the day. Disconnect for a time so that you can better connect with those you serve once you are back “on the grid.”

7. Affirm, affirm, affirm.

One of the most powerful practices in our Happy Teacher Revolution meetings has been to offer personal, positive affirmations. Some sentence starters include: “I’m proud of myself for,” “I forgive myself for,” “I recognize the courage it took for me to,” and “I’m grateful for.” Write these affirmations down. Say them out loud. Text one to a well-being accountability partner and invite them to share their own. We also utilize opportunities to prioritize autonomy in Happy Teacher Revolution meetings by using the sentence frame, “I choose.” Some choices include: “I choose what to let go of,” “I choose to prioritize the relationships that matter,” and “No matter how the school year started, I choose to finish well.”

8. Find community.

Self-care is an incredibly individualized industry, but we are collectively craving a reduced sense of isolation and an increased sense of community. Now, more than ever, it is of utmost importance to check in with one another. The mental-health crises I experienced personally as a student were intercepted by my heroes, my teachers, because of the relationships they fostered in and out of their classroom community. The mental-health crisis is only getting worse, and we are posited with the unique chance to prioritize workplace well-being as a best-practice approach, not only professionally with each other, with our students, and with our stakeholders... but also personally with ourselves. **EC**

To find out more how to foster community care alongside personal care, check out the exciting new collaboration with Happy Teacher Revolution and the EdCan Network at: www.edcan.ca/HTR

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Happy Teacher Revolution



Happy Teacher Revolution is an international movement on a mission to organize and conduct well-being support communities for education professionals in order to help increase their happiness, retention, and professional sustainability. To learn more visit www.HappyTeacherRevolution.com



PHOTO: ISTOCK

Why Recess Matters More than Ever

The science behind the push for more play and social connection at school

Lauren McNamara is a Research Scientist at the Diversity Institute at Ryerson University. Her work is focused on the dynamic role of children's school-based relationships, particularly the ways in which they influence inclusion, equity, well-being, and school engagement. She is an Ashoka Fellow, an executive of the Ontario Healthy Schools Coalition, and a member of the Royal Society of Canada's working group on Children and Schools.

Tracy Vaillancourt is Full Professor and Tier 1 Canada Research Chair in School-Based Mental Health and Violence Prevention at the University of Ottawa. She is also the chair of the Royal Society of Canada's working group on Children and Schools.

SCHOOL, FOR NEARLY EVERY CHILD, means far more than schoolwork. This point was clearly highlighted by the pandemic-related isolation: children were missing their friends and the social fabric of their school communities. During the pandemic, most children in Canada were isolated at home or confined to cohorts during the school day, often separated from friends. Recess, lunch, extra-curricular sports were drastically reduced, if not cancelled altogether.

How quickly we were reminded that social connection, play, and overall well-being are critically important to a healthy childhood, and how quickly we were reminded that well-being is critically important to school engagement. Just as there have been concerns of pandemic-related "learning loss," there has been, unequivocally, a "play loss." As we start a fresh new school year, we argue that children will need an extended amount of school time to focus on reconnection, healing, and play. Supportive spaces at school will need to be carved out for this to happen.

Why social connection and play, and why now?

Schools have long been defined by standardization, academic competition, individualism, and conformity –

so much so that play, social connection, and a sense of belonging may seem trivial and counterproductive to the purpose of learning.

But there is a sizable body of research to indicate otherwise. In a landmark new book, *Let the Children Play*, Pasi Sahlberg and William Doyle (2019) consolidate over 700 recent research studies that link school-based play and social connection to increases in well-being and far better learning. Creativity, imagination, play, and social connection are foundational to well-being, and well-being is foundational to learning. It's that simple. Yet the education system tends to be deeply entrenched in practices and routines that pay less attention to the social and emotional needs of children.

But we can change this. If the pandemic is to have a silver lining, it's that it has highlighted the need to prioritize time and space for human connection. And this is particularly necessary in school, where attitudes and behaviour take root early and are continually reinforced. We have an opportunity now to change up the entrenched routines.

Let's start now with something rather simple: provide more – and better – recess.

Why recess? And why now?

Recess is a social space. Remember how important recess was to your life, for better or for worse? Recess, from the perspective of students, is far more than a break from instruction, a time for fresh air, or a need to amass the required 60 minutes of daily physical activity. We have long known that positive school friendships provide students with a sense of connectedness that makes school meaningful and engaging. Indeed, we know that learning happens in relationships, and relationships are forged when students have an opportunity to connect with their peers during the school day, most often outside of instructional time. These connections happen during lunch, on the playground, and in other informal school spaces, with important benefits for health and learning.

Yet, we need to pay attention to these informal settings to ensure that they are supportive and inclusive, otherwise we run the risk of undermining the very benefits we hope to realize. Unfortunately, out of all of the developed nations, Canada has some of the highest rates of school-based social harm – and the majority of this harm has been found to take place during recess and lunch. Many schoolyards, particularly those in low-income areas, are barren and uninviting, covered by a soulless layer of asphalt; and in dense urban neighborhoods, schoolyards are further impeded by their small size. And for some children, particularly those in low-income and

urban areas, recess may be the only chance for outdoor play and access to friends in their *entire* day. Our concern is that when these spaces go unsupported, we see higher rates of boredom, bullying, loneliness, and exclusion – factors that undermine children’s attempts at play and connection.

We can do better. It’s time to change this and use this time to prioritize well-being and ensure all children have the space in the school day to connect with others in activities that allow for meaningful, inclusive, and playful engagement. Far from detracting from learning, these opportunities can influence mood, well-being, school engagement, behaviour, learning, focus, attendance, and overall school climate.

More reasons to support play

Play and social connection mitigate stress. After nearly a year of social isolation, chaotic change, and uncertainty, students are undeniably experiencing stress. Stress makes it difficult for children to access the aspects of the brain that allow for thinking and reasoning. We now know that play activates the brain’s reward circuitry and releases endorphins – the chemicals that make us feel happy and calm.

Play, by definition, is something we do because we want to, not because we have to (Gray, 2013). This is important for children – particularly now – because it gives them a sense of control and predictability that allows them to feel safe and secure, mitigating the effects of anxiety and stress. Both laughter and physically active play trigger the release of oxytocin and serotonin, chemicals that relieve tension and buffer against further stress. Social play provides the emotionally sustaining qualities of happiness and support, which is precisely what children need to feel safe and secure.

Play makes children happy. Gasp – dare we consider this as a “metric” to measure school quality? Schools are far more than academic institutions. They are communities where children spend a considerable amount of their waking hours during highly significant developmental years. We know that when children feel included, connected, and accepted by their communities, they are more likely to develop a healthy, positive attitude toward themselves and others that influences their behaviour at school. When children feel calm, secure, and happy they are more likely to enjoy school, engage cooperatively and considerately toward their schoolmates, be committed to their schoolwork, and have higher expectations of success.

Children have a Right to Play. Because play is so fundamental to a healthy childhood, Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (General Assembly of the United Nations, 1989) deems play and rest to be indispensable human rights: “the right to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child.” This responsibility to protect and promote this right includes schools. This right can be leveraged by ensuring the recess environment is inclusive, fully accessible, secure from the effects of social harm, and appropriate for all genders, ages, stages, and abilities (UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2013).

Children should *love* school. We all want our children to experience an ecosystem that supports curiosity, creativity, and connection. When this nightmare pandemic is over, let’s collectively find ways to give them opportunities to laugh and connect again, to have meaningful breaks in their day that allow them to heal from the relentless trauma. Let’s push hard for what William Doyle calls a new Golden Age of Play – and be sure schools are part of this conversation. **EC**

This article is a summary of a chapter from the Royal Society of Canada’s Report on COVID and Schools, in press, 2021.

Steps to better recess

As a start, we suggest all stakeholders – teachers, administrators, education leaders, parents – continuously advocate for schools to integrate more and better recess:

- Engage children in planning and organizing of recess time – especially older youth. Include discussions about activity preferences, inclusion, social harm, equipment management, and fair play. Be sure to set clear expectations and rules for health and safety.
- Ensure children have a continuum of options to choose from. Create leadership opportunities for older students – they can help maintain the equipment and emphasize the importance of diversity and inclusion.
- Consider all the available indoor and outdoor spaces to provide a range of activity options and minimize crowding.
- Encourage principals to lengthen recess times and add recesses. Better yet, pressure the Ministry of Education in your province or territory to include this in the *Education Act*.
- Allow and encourage teachers to take their students outside during class time to engage in playful activities that are fun, enjoyable, and inclusive of all ages, stages, abilities, preferences, and needs.
- Encourage teachers and staff to avoid strict rules like “no running” and “no ball throwing” that can undermine the benefits of play and physical activity.
- Help schools in low-income neighborhoods raise money for schoolyard improvements – the disparity and inequity are remarkable and painfully unfair.
- And let’s not withhold recess as punishment for missed schoolwork, poor classroom behaviour, or any other reason. Instead, let’s ensure that all children are able to experience meaningful and playful engagement, free of social harm.

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The bridge to possible



Leveraging Pandemic Lessons to Heal

Promoting health in educational spaces

Shelly Russell-Mayhew, PhD, is Research Professor and a Registered Psychologist in the Werklund School of Education at the University of Calgary. You can find out more about her research program at <https://werklund.ucalgary.ca/research/body-image-lab>

Kerri Murray is the Director of Strategy and Innovation with Ever Active Schools (EAS), a registered national charity based in Alberta that aims to improve health and learning outcomes for students. Find out more at <https://everactive.org>

BY SHELLY RUSSELL-MAYHEW AND KERRI MURRAY

IF THERE IS A SILVER LINING to the COVID-19 pandemic, one could argue that it demonstrated the critical role schools play in a functioning society, the interdependence of education and health, and the importance of a whole-school approach to health and well-being. We witnessed schools everywhere do their part in the crisis, going to great lengths to limit viral transmission. Imagine that! Every school in Canada took steps to protect public health that involved home, school, and community, while addressing social and physical environments, policies, teaching and learning, and partnerships and services. This, in essence, is Comprehensive School Health.

Physical health - mask-wearing, sanitizing, and distance between desks - was a dominant educational point for months, but perhaps the school health imperative we now face is the mental well-being of students, teachers, and staff. Can we learn from and leverage the education system's pandemic response as a template for how to address health in other ways, and not only heal from the impacts of the pandemic, but also promote mental

well-being in schools for all stakeholders?

If we ask the right questions now - with intention, compassion, and courage - we can reprioritize the value we place on well-being in school settings. Now more than ever, Comprehensive School Health needs to be on the national education agenda.

Comprehensive School Health: An overview

Wellness is a balance of mind, body, and spirit that results in a feeling of well-being. As part of their social purpose, schools have a fundamental role to play in the well-being of children and youth. It is important to consider the systemic influences and environments in which children and adolescents emerge into adulthood. Young people spend a lot of time in educational contexts.

When schools provide health-promoting environments, it creates capacity and opportunity for students to reach their full potential.

Comprehensive School Health (CSH) is gaining recognition among school districts across the globe, and across educational tiers in Canada, for its value in promoting wellness for students, teachers, and

Figure 1: Comprehensive School Health Framework



CHART: COURTESY PAN-CANADIAN JOINT CONSORTIUM FOR SCHOOL HEALTH



other members of the school community (staff, parents, community partners, etc.; Russell-Mayhew & Ireland et al., 2017). The CSH framework, which is based upon the knowledge that health and wellness enhance children's ability to learn, provides a multifaceted structure for improving wellness within the school community.

Comprehensive School Health is an approach that includes:

- teaching health knowledge and skills both inside and beyond the walls of the classroom
- creating health-enabling social and physical environments
- creating healthy policies
- facilitating links with parents and the wider community to support optimal well-being and learning (Kolbe, 2019).

It is an internationally recognized framework that places students as primary beneficiaries of improved health and learning outcomes through coordinated action with all members of the school community (Koenig & Rodger et al., 2018; Langford & Bonell et al., 2015). This framework is based on evidence that healthy students have increased capacity for learning and that well-being has a positive effect on academic achievement throughout their lifespan (Byrne & Pickett et al., 2016, 2018). Health and education are interdependent. In other words, healthy students are better learners, and better-educated students are healthier (Squires, 2019; Viner & Russell et al., 2020).

A whole-school approach like Comprehensive School Health considers the well-being of the whole student and the whole community. It is not a program or curriculum, it is a process that integrates

health promotion into the daily life of the school. The CSH framework takes advantage of a community development approach to enable customization to each unique site and the local context of a school.

Comprehensive School Health across the education system

The CSH framework seeks to harmonize actions across four components:

- teaching and learning
- social and physical environments
- policy and partnerships
- services.

These components guide actions in schools, such as: Ensuring high-quality health education, addressing teacher and staff well-being, revising school development plans to include well-being, and/or increasing social engagement opportunities for students. Ultimately, the CSH framework is intended to foster local autonomy to shift the culture to embrace well-being practices.

Increasingly, teachers are recognized as key agents of socialization, as they occupy positions that allow them to positively influence school wellness and student well-being. Teachers are our most important resource for the well-being of school communities; there is no profession with such profound influence. They influence people, places, and spaces in education. We know that health and education are deeply interconnected and intertwined, so if we want

to influence outcomes, we need to focus on the whole person – not just academic outcomes – whether that is faculty, teachers, staff, or students. This includes post-secondary teacher preparation programs, which both serve as a feeder system for, and are an active part of, the education system. Supporting the well-being of pre-service teachers prior to their involvement in K-12 schools is an innovative

way to promote transformational systemic change.

The potential cumulative effects of widespread, comprehensive wellness action across educational contexts are exciting to imagine. How might the world be different if every educational space was a place where each student, staff, teacher, and faculty felt a sense of belonging and was able to reach their full potential? What if every school was a healthy school? What if every BED program was offered in a health-promoting post-secondary context?

Figure 2: What Does a System-Wide Approach to Health Look Like?

Component of Comprehensive School Health	What This Looked Like in a Pandemic Response	Actions to Support Mental Well-being
Social and Physical Environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Classrooms were redesigned to create six feet of distance between students Students were grouped into cohorts for classroom and social interactions Hand sanitizer stations were set up throughout the school Outdoor spaces were used to extend learning and reduce transmission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure all students are connected to a significant adult in the school Design classroom spaces with zones for conversation, concentration, and calming Practise and model healthy relationships and interpersonal skills among staff members
Teaching and Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools added signage and emphasized hand hygiene Systems were created to mobilize online learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure students have opportunities to understand and practise healthy relationship skills Teach students social and emotional regulation strategies and provide practice time Provide teachers with professional learning for their own mental well-being; address stigma, help-seeking behaviours, and work-life balance strategies
Partnerships and Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication with health authorities and parents was continuous Schools welcomed virtual partners to share services and provide supports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue collaborations with health promotion departments of local health authorities and partners who can provide expertise in mental health at low or no cost Engage parents and caregivers in diversity appreciation and social and emotional learning initiatives
Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School council meetings were held online, making them more accessible to some Schools added health screening protocols Mask wearing was required Stay-at-home policies were developed for close contacts Cleaning and sanitizing policies were practised Changes were made to use-of-space policies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include well-being as a discussion point on agendas at staff and parent meetings, and in school and professional development plans Ensure school policies support healthy behaviours and relationships (e.g. safe and caring policies, bullying prevention, and digital safety)

So, what now?

We urgently need coordinated strategies that support action at all levels of school governance to address mental health, safety, belonging, and other psychosocial outcomes in schools.

Recasting educational spaces as health-promoting spaces is a systemic change that requires societal support and commitment from across the health and education sectors, as we have recently experienced with the pandemic response. Now we know it is possible, and on a dramatically large scale, too. Comprehensive School Health gives us the framework, and the pandemic gave us the experience. In Figure 2, we explore how schools can leverage their experience of a system-wide approach to health through their pandemic practices into an opportunity for action that supports the mental health and well-being of students, staff, and teachers.

This may seem like a daunting task that is beyond any one individual, and it is. Still, there are small steps we can all take to do our part from both within and outside of the education system to drive change. A good first step is to educate ourselves and others about Comprehensive School Health (see Learn More).

Real and sustainable change is possible if the education system is structured, and supported, to embrace its role in creating health-promoting environments. At their best, education systems can support all children, youth, and young adults to reach their full potential, while ensuring teachers first learn and then work in health-promoting environments to facilitate learning and nurture the well-being of future generations. This type of system-wide embrace of well-being in Canadian education is not just the imaginings of idealists, but was proven possible in the context of the pandemic response.

Education is a human endeavour. In the context of CSH, this means attending to all the ways of wellness – physical, social, emotional, intellectual,

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spiritual, environmental, and occupational – across educational contexts. The well-being of students, staff, teachers, and faculty is at stake, and we can now better imagine the difference it will make. **EC**

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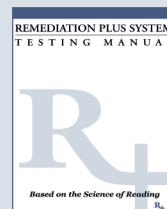
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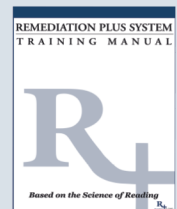
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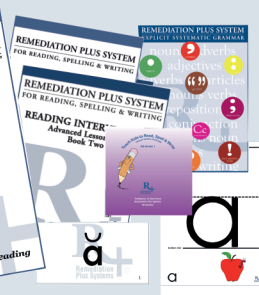
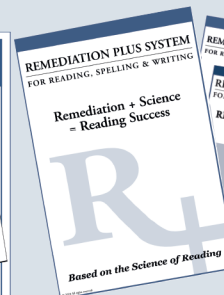
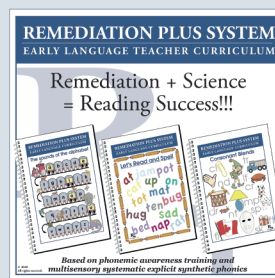
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Beyond Accommodations

Rethinking gender inclusion in schools

BY LJ SLOVIN

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LJ Slovin is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Curriculum and Pedagogy at the University of British Columbia. Their research examines the conditions that structure understandings of gender nonconformity within schools.
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AT EAST CITY HIGH, a large high school in British Columbia's Lower Mainland, the gymnasium was located in an outbuilding. There were two entrances, one on the east side for girls and one on the west side for boys. These entrances led to gendered washrooms and changerooms and then flowed into the main gymnasium, where all classes met at the start of the period to rendezvous with their teachers. This setup required students to select a binary gender just to get into class.

At the start of the year, Mr. Gonzalez,¹ a Physical Education (PE) teacher at East City High, gave Raeyun,² one of his Grade 10 students, special permission to use the boys' changeroom. However, Raeyun did not want to use the boys' changeroom. He was worried that being surrounded by other boys would only serve to underscore the ways he was different from them. Not only did Raeyun never use the boys' changeroom, but he also never once got changed for PE at school. Instead, Raeyun

came to school already in his PE clothes and stayed in them all day, no matter how sweaty he got during class. Raeyun cleverly figured out that he could sneak into the gymnasium through the back entrance by taking a staircase up from the staff parking lot. This tactic allowed Raeyun to avoid choosing a gender at the start of class.

I spent a year at East City High, moving alongside several gender-nonconforming³ youth as they went to class, attended extracurricular activities, fanned out across the campus for lunch, participated in artistic and musical performances, and just generally lived their lives. The youth who participated in the study all had different relationships with gender nonconformity, like Raeyun, whose relationship was complicated. He was a Filipino trans guy and aspired to pass; however, he experienced the world of East City High as a gender-nonconforming person most of the time. Even though he wanted to pass, Raeyun's gender was not easily understood at East City High. Often people struggled to see Raeyun as he saw himself. Raeyun once described this complexity to me, saying: "I'm not like completely [gender nonconforming], but I'm also not like a cis guy, so, kind of like midway. Like I'm part of the binary but I'm also like part of the binary in a weird way." Though few adults at the school understood Raeyun's gender, many people noticed that Raeyun did not "fit in" and responded to his presence in accordance with the accommodation approaches laid out by the district's trans-inclusive policy. Throughout Raeyun's time at East City High, teachers pulled him aside and offered individualized workarounds and alternatives, ways for Raeyun to still participate in gendered activities without feeling left out.

As accommodation approaches become more popular in North American schools, it is important to consider which students are welcomed by it (or not), and how a reliance on accommodation neglects to challenge cisheteronormativity. While the current emphasis on inclusive washrooms and changerooms is important, this focus does not address the larger issue of rethinking how pervasively schooling is organized around a system of visible, binary gender. Accommodation as a primary approach relies on gender nonconformity as a visible identity – an identity that sticks out and can be easily categorized as not fitting in at school. Visibility, as scholars have examined, relies on racialized, ableist, and settler colonial norms (Beauchamp, 2018; Gill-Peterson, 2018). For instance, popular ideas about gender nonconformity privilege white, thin, andro-masculine forms of expression. Since people at East City High frequently struggled to understand the complexities of youths' genders when they did not fit into these normative expectations, most of the youth that I worked with were not seen as gender nonconforming by others at the school.

How do schools' accommodation practices privilege binary enactments of trans identities? What might it mean for all youth if we, as educators, did not rely on the presumption that we can see our students' genders? What types of relationships with gender beyond the binary might we be able to welcome into our classrooms and schools if we let go of the need to know youths' genders? I aim to open up these questions through highlighting the experiences of two of the gender-nonconforming youth I moved alongside during my research.

Accommodations approaches: a brief introduction

Schools across North America have responded to the growing awareness of trans and gender-nonconforming students by implementing trans-inclusive policies and procedures. These policies often rely on creating and providing accommodations. The concept of accommodations has a long history in North America, from race politics to dis-

Scarecrow Jones understood the gendered dynamics in PE class as affecting “everyone everyday.” They did not want [an accommodation]; they wanted a less gendered experience of PE in general.

ability law. Currently, educators, activists, and legislators are using the language of accommodations as a framework for including trans students in schools. The basic intention of offering accommodations is to create greater equity of access. One of the main criticisms of accommodation approaches is that they focus on the individuals who encounter obstacles, rather than the systems and institutions that create those obstacles.

At East City High there was a hard-fought trans-inclusive policy that instructed teachers, counsellors, and administrators in responding to trans and gender-nonconforming students. This policy directly named possible accommodations that students could receive at school: the right to access the washroom or changeroom that matched their gender identity, to be addressed by the name and pronoun they “prefer,” to dress in clothing that aligned with their gender expression, and to join athletic activities that corresponded with their gender identity. Though these rights were written for *all* trans students, including gender-nonconforming and non-binary youth, the material conditions and knowledge of staff largely limited the policy's reach to binary trans students. For instance, there were only gendered sports teams and gendered changerooms, so a gender-nonconforming student who was not a boy or a girl had no sport team to join or changeroom that matched their gender identity. Also, few teachers at the school were familiar or comfortable with gender-neutral pronouns. As a result, students rarely felt invited into sharing “they/them” pronouns with anyone but close friends. The policy facilitated the experiences of students who knew they wanted to transition from one binary gender to another, but there was little space or understanding for youth who related to their genders as fluid, flexible, and changing.

In listing out specific accommodations, the policy also indicated the presumed points of conflict, concern, and/or challenges for trans students in schools. The policy attempted to highlight when and where trans students would encounter difficulties moving through their days in the same manner as cisgender students, and then offered possible workarounds. There are two main issues with this approach. First, this framework singles out trans students as problems in need of a solution in school. This issue has been covered extensively elsewhere in critiques of accommodation practices generally and specifically in relation to trans youth (Airton, 2013; Loutzenheiser, 2015; Travers, 2018). Second, this approach hinges on the intertwined ideas that trans students are visible to educators and that only visibly gender-nonconforming students will benefit from gender-inclusive schooling. Let's examine this idea further.

Fitting into PE class

Each term, Mr. Gonzalez led his Grade 10 PE class through fitness

testing. Fitness testing is not required by the province and not all PE teachers at East City High incorporated this activity into their curriculum. However, it was a main feature of Mr. Gonzalez's class. To pass a fitness test, Mr. Gonzalez instructed students that they had to perform according to an index of gendered standards that he maintained at the front of his binder. Though Mr. Gonzalez had elected to use these tests in his classes as forms of assessment, he still worried about how they excluded Raeyun. "What am I supposed to do with my trans students?" Mr. Gonzalez once asked, pointing at his page of gendered standards. Mr. Gonzalez was worried about fairness and safety, and he wanted to protect Raeyun. Therefore, he worked to create modifications for what he viewed as Raeyun's "unique" situation. The assumption was that Raeyun, as a *visibly* gender-nonconforming student, was the only one who would benefit from a less binary alternative in class.

However, many of the trans youth that I worked with over my year at East City High were never seen by their teachers, counsellors, or the administrators as gender nonconforming. Since they were not *visibly* gender nonconforming, like Raeyun, these students were never presented with any options for workarounds at school. For instance, almost no one read Scarecrow Jones, a Grade 9 non-binary student, as gender nonconforming. "In terms of other people, no, I think that they probably do not see me [as gender nonconforming]," Scarecrow Jones explained. "Since I'm not out to many people, I don't want to give anyone any reason to think that I am not what I appear to be." Scarecrow Jones' gender nonconformity did not align with others' expectations, so they were not offered any special permissions. To

others, Scarecrow Jones did not *look* as if they needed them. Therefore, Scarecrow Jones got ready for PE in the girls' changeroom, was counted as a girl during activities, and was judged based upon the standards for girls. Even if Scarecrow Jones' teacher had noticed that they were non-binary, there was nowhere else for Scarecrow Jones to get changed, no other team for them to join, and no other standards by which they could be evaluated. Scarecrow Jones described PE as "this weird heteronormative culture, like heteronormative, cisgender ingrained into everyone's brain that's just making it so much more difficult, and so much weirder for everyone every day." Scarecrow Jones understood the gendered dynamics in PE class as affecting "everyone every day," not just gender-nonconforming students. Furthermore, they believed that teachers' strategies of offering individualized alternatives for visibly nonconforming students did not address, let alone disrupt, the cisheteronormative culture and curriculum of PE class that they found so difficult and weird. Scarecrow Jones did not want a third option; they wanted a less gendered experience of PE in general.

Accommodations beyond PE class

While PE class is perhaps more easily understood as a gendered space, these issues transcend subject areas. Though East City High had a reputation for being progressive, diverse, and inclusive, I was never in a class in which an adult created space for the possibility of gender nonconformity without either being asked to by a young person or in response to the presence of a known trans youth. Both Raeyun

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and Scarecrow Jones were enrolled in French Immersion at East City High. At the start of the year, Madame Blanchet took Raeyun aside and asked him what pronouns he wanted to use in French. His visible gender nonconformity compelled Madame Blanchet to reach out and initiate this conversation. While this act was helpful for Raeyun, it also singled him out as not fitting in and in need of an alternative in class.

The first time I went to Mr. Gallagher's French drama class, he conducted a mini-lesson on French gender-neutral pronouns. I did not attend his class until the beginning of October, which meant that Mr. Gallagher had not believed it necessary to broach the existence of these pronouns until compelled to do so by the presence of my visibly gender-nonconforming body. However, Scarecrow Jones was in that class. We spoke about this situation months later. Scarecrow Jones told me, "The only time anything (related to trans topics) has ever happened is when you were in Mr. Gallagher's class and he explained the gender-neutral pronoun." Mr. Gallagher only brought up pronouns the first time I attended, though he always used them for me. Since he was not able to see Scarecrow Jones as gender nonconforming, Mr. Gallagher never pulled them aside, as Madame Blanchet had with Raeyun. Mr. Gallagher understood accommodating trans people as important, but by waiting until I arrived to tell students about these pronouns, Mr. Gallagher communicated both his belief that knowing this information was only pertinent if it directly affected someone, and that he would be able to tell if that were the case.

ACCOMMODATION APPROACHES rely on the assumption that gender nonconformity is a visible identity. There is a presumption that we as educators will be able to tell if our students are trans, which allows us to respond by creating alternatives in our classrooms and schools. I argue that instead of understanding trans-inclusive policies as providing resolutions for gender-nonconforming youth in schools, we look beyond accommodation strategies to our pedagogies. For instance, rather than require our students to make their genders visible to us in ways that we can understand, we can always teach for the possibility of gender nonconformity. Educators do not need policies

What if we let go of the belief that gender is binary, visible, and that we have a right to know how our students identify on any given day?

to create classrooms that reimagine normative expectations about gender; we can cultivate this shift by not only teaching trans topics but also through actively challenging gender roles and heteronormative assumptions in our own teaching and among students. This move means no longer categorizing students by gender, abandoning gendered assumptions that inform how we teach and interact with our students, and integrating material throughout all subjects that likewise invites these complexities.

Welcoming gender nonconformity into our classrooms means we do not need to pull students aside to ask about their pronoun preferences, because those pronouns already exist as possibilities in the classroom. Furthermore, if we approach our classrooms with the idea that students may be gender nonconforming, we no longer have to be on the lookout for signs a youth may be trans and thus in need of an accommodation. What harm would it cause to tell all students about gender-neutral pronouns and use them in our teaching? What relationships with gender might we invite into our schools if we let go of the belief that gender is binary, visible, and that we have a right to know how our students identify on any given day? Instead of asking students to make their genders known to us, we can let go of the idea that knowing students' genders is the same as knowing them. **EC**

NOTES

- 1 All names are pseudonyms.
- 2 The youth participants chose their own names and pronouns.
- 3 "Gender nonconforming" is an expansive term that encompasses a multiplicity of gender identities. It underscores how a person either intentionally challenges or is perceived to disrupt normative gender constructions, including not conforming to expectations connected to their gender designated at birth.

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Making the Healthy Choice the Easy Choice

A Comprehensive School Health approach to support social and emotional learning in schools

Kaitlyn Bailey is the Comprehensive School Health Facilitator in northern B.C. for Dedicated Action for School Health Non-Profit Society (DASH). DASH collaborates with schools and other partners to create, facilitate, and support school communities to be optimal places for health and learning through a Comprehensive School Health approach.

BY KAITLYN BAILEY

LAST MAY I VISITED Walnut Park Elementary, which is located on the unceded traditional territories of the Wet'suwet'en in Smithers, B.C. While navigating the halls to get to Mary Neto's Grade 4 classroom, I passed students and staff decked out in denim, fluorescent headbands, tie-dye masks, scrunchies, and leather jackets. It was '80s day.

Mrs. Neto welcomed me into her classroom and invited me to make myself at home. Students were quietly reading at their desks, some eating snacks, while others continued to trickle in. One student asked Mrs. Neto if he could tell her something, and when she replied of course, he told her about his dog running away (they found him), and then getting stuck in traffic, almost making him late for school. Mrs. Neto empathized with his hectic morning and said she was glad he made it to school on time in the end.

Looking around, I noticed many objects and displays that were familiar from my childhood Grade 4 classroom. Lined up along the windowsill were Styrofoam cups filled with dirt and the beginnings of tiny green sprouts. On the walls were exhibits of student work. However, there were also differences. Posters on the back bulletin board showed the different "Core Competencies" (Communicating, Collaborating, Creative Thinking, Critical and Reflective Thinking, and Personal and Social Identity).

The chairs students were sitting at weren't all the standard plastic-backed chair I remember either; some were wobble stools and others were on rockers.

A buzzer interrupted my thoughts, announcing the end of individual reading time. Students were instructed to find a partner and read to each other. Two boys reading Calvin and Hobbes comics partnered up and laughed at the antics of the boy and the tiger. Over the murmur of the class I heard a girl exclaim, "Oh, poor dinosaur!" in response to the story her friend was sharing. I hadn't been in the class for more than 15 minutes and I had already witnessed displays of students practising and strengthening their social and emotional skills.

Walnut Park Elementary is one of seven schools in Bulkley Valley School District 54 (SD 54). It is no surprise that I observed social and emotional learning (SEL) in Mrs. Neto's class, as SEL is a priority in the district. For those of you who are unfamiliar with SEL, it focuses on five competencies (CASEL, n.d.):

- Self-awareness (ability to understand your emotions, thoughts, and values and how they affect behaviour)
- Self-management (ability to manage emotions, thoughts, and behaviours to reach personal goals)
- Social awareness (ability to take other points of view and empathize with others)
- Relationship skills (ability to establish and maintain



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supportive relationships)

- Responsible decision making (ability to make caring, constructive choices about behaviour and social interactions).

There are numerous SEL programs designed for the school setting; however SD 54's approach goes beyond a single program, which is likely one of the reasons it is so successful. SD 54 uses an approach that aligns with Comprehensive School Health (CSH).

CSH is an internationally recognized framework for supporting improvements in students' educational outcomes while addressing school health in a planned, integrated, and holistic way. It is based upon the proven relationship between health and education: healthy students are better learners and more educated students are healthier.

Schools are often seen as an ideal setting to promote health among children and youth. Most children and youth attend school, and therefore ideas taught at school reach the majority of the population. However, educators already have a lot of material to cover in the short span of ten months. Adding more to their plate can be overwhelming, and in some cases, impossible. If you imagine each subject that educators have to cover as a block, many educators are already carrying their

maximum number of blocks. Using a CSH approach to promote health ensures that we aren't just adding another block to educators' already towering stacks. Instead, a CSH approach seeks to embed health into the school and district culture so that making the healthy choice is the easy choice. I like to imagine CSH as a wheelbarrow rather than another block. It may take time and energy for educators and schools to figure out how best to use it, and how to organize their other blocks within it, but once they do, the wheelbarrow actually makes carrying all of the other blocks easier.

Specifically, CSH involves planning health-promoting activities in four distinct but interrelated areas:

- Teaching and learning
- Physical and social environment
- Community partnerships
- School policies.

Here is more detail about each component:

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning occurs in the classroom and beyond. It includes any teaching and learning opportunities that build knowledge and

skills. Students learn from teachers, other adults in the school and community, and from their peers.

Physical and social environment

The physical environment refers to the physical spaces in the school that support health and well-being. This includes buildings, equipment, and outdoor areas. The social environment includes the quality of relationships and emotional well-being of members of the school community.

Community partnerships

There are many potential community partners that schools can connect with to promote health and well-being. Some examples are parents, other schools or classrooms, community organizations, and health professionals.

School policies

The final component of CSH refers to provincial, district, school, or classroom policies, as well as rules, procedures, and codes of conduct that help shape a caring and safe school environment and promote student health and well-being.

CSH can be used to promote any health topic, but for this article we're going to take a deeper look at how SD 54's actions to promote SEL in their schools align with a CSH approach.

Using a CSH approach to promote health ensures that we aren't just adding another block to educators' already towering stack.

In 2016, the B.C. Ministry of Education released a revamped K-9 curriculum with the significant new addition of Core Competencies. The Core Competencies closely align with the five SEL competencies. Incorporating the Core Competencies into the provincial curriculum is an example of a **policy** change that supports SEL in schools. Policy changes such as these are effective, especially when combined with support for implementation. While changes to the curriculum are out of the control of any one school district, the district can provide this support to ensure they are successful.

A case in point: around the same time that the new curriculum was being released, SD 54 created a new position within their district: Elementary Social and Emotional Helping Teacher. It was originally a part-time role and filled by a school counsellor in the district. Over time it developed into a .8 FTE position as demand from educators to work with the Helping Teacher increased. In a short video about the initiative, superintendent Mike McDiarmid explains that the role was spurred by increasing concern about the mental wellness of students in the district and educators feeling like they didn't have the necessary background to teach the social and emotional curriculum.

This **partnership** between the district and elementary schools successfully supported implementation of SEL and the Core Competencies. Educators could schedule sessions for the Social and Emotional Helping Teacher to join their classroom to collaborate and co-teach around the social and emotional curriculum. If you think back to my

earlier analogy of the teacher holding a towering stack of blocks, you might ask, "How are they supposed to load the wheelbarrow without dropping everything? They don't have any free hands." This shows just how important partnerships are when it comes to CSH. In SD 54, educators who had previously felt uncomfortable or unsure about how to approach SEL gained valuable skills and confidence by observing and working alongside the Social and Emotional Helping Teacher. They were then able to more easily incorporate the ideas that they had learned into their regular lesson plans, which laid the groundwork for embedding SEL into the school culture.

In Mrs. Neto's classroom, the **physical environment** supported SEL with different seating options that allowed students to self-regulate depending on how they were feeling. Schools and districts can support changes in the physical environment by ensuring there is funding available for classrooms to put toward SEL. There are also strategies educators can use to impact the physical environment that don't cost any money. Mrs. Neto turned off some of the lights in the classroom when students were high energy and it was time to focus, and had different seating configurations that were associated with different levels of ease to communicate with their classmates.

Modelling behaviour and actions is another form of teaching. By modelling SEL through their words and actions, teachers are directly impacting the **social environment**. Cultivating an environment of mutual respect and care will support learning and create a space that is more enjoyable for everyone. Sometimes actions speak louder than words; Mrs. Neto's calm and empathetic demeanor set a precedent that her students followed.

Teaching and learning is part of many of the actions that I've already discussed, but SEL was also explicitly addressed while I was in Mrs. Neto's class. After students each did two laps around the school (an effective way to regulate their energy levels and develop their fitness), they came inside and worked on their daily goals. Mrs. Neto started the class off by reviewing her own goal from the previous day: to read one chapter of her book. She shared that it was difficult because she was tired, but she persevered and managed to finish the chapter. Alongside their goals, students had space to write the steps they would take to achieve them and something they were grateful for. I walked around the room asking students what their goals were, and they varied from being a better listener to eating healthier snacks. In the space asking what they were grateful for, many of the students wrote, "Mrs. Neto."

Procedures such as daily goal setting and partner reading demonstrate how **policy** can be established at the classroom level, and that it doesn't have to come from the district when using a CSH approach.

These collective actions in policy, community partnerships, the environment, and teaching and learning have made SEL an integral part of students' school days in SD 54. Hopefully you can also see how the approach the district took meant that the weight of it didn't fall solely on any one person's lap. And while Mrs. Neto is particularly passionate about SEL, the underlying SEL principles are present in every classroom in the district.

Health and learning are intertwined. Using a CSH approach to make health and well-being part of your school's culture will inevitably improve student learning and behaviour and contribute to the development of more well-rounded students. **EC**

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THE WHITWORTH AWARD
2020 WINNER

When police shut down a group of Alberta students' safely distanced "trunk visits" in their school parking lot, they made do with small-scale driveway visits.

PHOTO: COURTESY SHIRLEY R. STEINBERG



No New Kids on the Block

*Advocating for wellness
through public space for youth*

Shirley R. Steinberg, PhD, is the Werklund Research Professor of Critical Youth Studies at the University of Calgary. Her research examines equity, social justice, media and popular cultural literacy, and the cultural studies of youth. An advocate of youth activism and empowerment, she is the author of many books and articles about youth.

BY SHIRLEY R. STEINBERG

SPRING OF 2020, mid-COVID lockdown and Canadian youth were planted at their computers for remote learning. Stores were closed, sports on hold, families isolated in their homes, and friends unable to hang out. Most middle- and high-school students spent part of their days creating ways to be interpersonal. Students from a high school in Alberta found an ingenious way to interact: they circled their wagons. Imitating ancestors who moved West almost two centuries ago, the students drove to the empty high-school parking lot and backed up to form a circle with their trunks and hatches open. They sat individually in the back of their own vehicles. Facing

one another, between three and five metres apart, they sat, talked, and played music; they were kids doing what kids do. They had a space to be. Administrators still working daily in the school gave a thumbs-up to their creative pupils. I asked one of the Grade 11 students to send me a short video. In it, I observed 12 cars backed into the wagon wheel: one kid per vehicle, all legs dangling from the back and each teen engaged. During the most terrifying global time in a century, there was hope and initiative displayed by the clever youth who figured out how to safely be together, and with the approval from the school leadership team who were glad to create a space for their

students *to be*, and *to be well*. I was impressed by the good intent and action all around and pitched an idea to make a short film with them. I would interview each participant remotely and ask them to shoot some of their sessions. The youth were thrilled that I was inspired by their collaborative genius, and I began to organize the logistics.

The local police shut it down. With no explanations, one day they came to the parking lot and told the youth to cease and desist. Overruling the school administrators, law enforcement made sure that no wagons would circle.

Having a place “to be,” a public space, creates healthy and positive ways of being. An ad hoc social community emerges in public spaces, where senses are stimulated and the similarities and diversity of those involved are displayed (Mean & Tims, 2005). Wellness is associated with the benefits of public space, which is claimed equally by everyone. The space reinvents itself daily: inhabitants change, the ability to seek an area for body and mind is created and recreated. Public space is not only the product of a developer, city planner, school board, or museum, it is often an unofficial collaboration between those who determine the space is valuable.

Urban public space is often conceived in parks, yet many areas have ceased mapping out new parks. While some public urban spaces for warm weather have been introduced, with shared public gardening, exercise space, meditation paths, biking and roller blading trails, and skateboard ramps and tubes, little consideration or initiative has been established to create winter-friendly public spaces. Canadian youth are left out in the cold.

From child advancement to youth encumbrance

Public space is often unattainable for youth; indeed many towns and cities have no designated space for youth. The last pre-pandemic public space I saw was in a parking lot. Between 25 and 40 high-school kids were hanging out in small groups in front of a Cineplex at the south end of an enormous mall, an early spring day, they were enjoying the weather. As I parked, four police cars pulled up and ordered them to leave. Canadian malls are often a gathering spot for youth. Avoiding inclement weather, Canadian youth visit malls for restrooms, food facilities, and stores, they also contribute to the economy by shopping. Claiming crime instances and theft, many malls have instituted bans for under-18 shoppers unless they are accompanied by a parent. Yet according to a 2016 Government of Quebec report, while youth are accused of shoplifting and vandalism over three times more often than adults, they are *less* likely to shoplift and vandalize (Lowrie, 2018).

Public space is democratic – not corporately or politically democratic. It is a space where one can feel safe. A place that allows movement, sound, art, quiet, the ability to congregate, the ability for a group of people to make known something important to them. But public space creates a difference between children and youth regarding access. Public space for children, of course, is chaperoned, shepherded. Children are with a teacher or an adult of some sort: a babysitter, a youth, someone who’s helping facilitate their enjoyment of the space. They interact in a place where they can climb on toys, wade, walk; someone is there to ensure little children are safe and nurtured. Adults and caregivers support children to enjoy public space, to run, to feel, to experiment. How important that experimentation

Public space is often unattainable for youth. Without healthy special alternatives for youth, safe places to be, our teens resort to whatever they can find.

becomes. Successes can happen for children in public spaces. The first time a child walks, runs, throws a ball, or rides a bike speaks to enormous growth and success. Public space is special for children, allowing socialization, physical activity, environmental awareness, fresh air, and wellness.

For youth, it can be a different scenario. North American youth are often seen as a population to be feared. My work has focused on the notion that many adults just don’t like youth (Steinberg, 2018). According to many adults, they are a revolutionary group, nonconformists. Along with their clothing, music, art, their way, the fact that they are youth, they become something to fear. Youth are often not allowed to be in a public space without adult supervision. There are dramatic differences in parental attitudes between a baby’s space and the space for a youth *to be*. With new babies, an obsession with advanced and appropriate development ensues. We watch for babies to roll over at four months, sit up at six months, and walk at one year. Potty training tends to be a milestone, with parents and family applauding as they stand around the toilet. Talking is an enormous concern for parents; expectations for the first word, then sentences haunt most parental minds. From preschool through Grade 1, expectations and hope surround the development of a child. Tying shoes is a stressful hurdle and the first playdate and friendship is a celebration. Riding the first trike and then a two-wheeler become kidhood capstones. Parents wait for their young children to become self-sufficient, independent, and able to entertain themselves. Up until nine or ten, each success is heralded and compared to other children of the same age.

By the time a child is a tween, parents reverse course and fear their child’s independence. No longer do parents push for their progeny to make their own decisions, pick out the day’s clothing, be creative. Parental complaints often barrage teens: their hair is wrong, their clothing is inappropriate, and their language is appalling. *North American parents go from finding success in children to finding failure in teens*. The same parents who pushed their little ones to make decisions, talk, choose clothes, and ride bikes are now fearful of skateboarding, rollerblading, pink hair, and midriff tops. Such irony in our childrearing. Adding to the nixing comes suspicion, doubt, fear and distrust... for both the teen and the parents. I contend that most adults just don’t understand or like teens; consequently, the rules pile on, adult/youth discord and tumultuous years commence. Along with this discord comes the restriction of places where teens are free “to be” and an adult need to control and surveil youth. To have healthy youth, we must find ways to have healthy public spaces available throughout

the year for teens to create communities, hang out, and dangle their legs. Social distancing isn't the problem; finding a place to safely socially distance is. Safe, public spaces must become a priority for our Canadian youth.

In search of healthy public spaces for youth “to be”

Dislike and fear of youth is uncovered regarding *where* the youth are, *where* they hang out, and *who* they are with. With limited safe spaces *to be*, our youth seek refuge in social media, online gaming, and smartphone addiction, all resulting in loss of socialization, healthy spaces, and shared communities. Space for youth to gather is limited: cars, homes with oft-gone parents, basements, and barns can become evening spaces to act out, kick back, and engage in exactly the activities the parents are so worried about. Without healthy special alternatives for youth, safe places to be, our teens resort to whatever they can find.

I was recently on a committee with city planners, university professors, and architects. Our charge was to discuss ways to turn a downtown walking mall into a viable and energetic public space. The area is known to be a haven for runaway youth and people who sleep rough, somewhat itinerant in nature, and many citizens avoid the area. I suggested creating a public space to serve youth, both the vulnerable teens who populate the mall and after-school kids in general. I noted that little ones run free in public spaces and are urged to experiment and climb, yet youth are often stopped or given signals that “you can't be here, this space isn't for you.” The same public space changes depending on the age of the occupant. I proposed a public theatre space - one that would allow crevices and climbing spots to serve both little ones and teens in physical movement and exercise, with the space also being used for impromptu performances, slam poetry, and improvisational theatre. Using the notion of theatre as public space, participants could mould the area to suit their visions. Possibly this area could offer some sort of wall in the same area that could be designated to create changeable graffiti where youth organizations could sponsor a space for artistic expression in a city where graffiti is completely illegal and has a full-time quasi police force patrolling for it. A small bit of interest was generated, but most of the group was anxious to turn back to exploring pop-up stores, picnic tables, and museum space.

In search of public spaces for wellness

I once found a place in the Highlands of Scotland by following an old sign, “Stone Circle” written with crayon or old paint, it had an arrow pointing to the left. I remember driving up there, just another pretty road. It led

me to an enormous meadow of soft, green green moss, in the moss was a stone circle - a sort of Stonehenge, but not really. It didn't have a name. There was a sense of mystery that I loved. One could walk all over.... there were no ropes, no signs, no poster that told us where we could take a picture. It was just a free space where anyone could run and touch the stones, chase around, or sit, as I chose to, in the very middle of the middle. I was in a space that was private and public at the same time. Low mountains were all around me, magical mountains with moors and the pillow softness of the Earth in all directions.

I'm not a meditator but I was able to do my way of meditating while I was there. Years later, when I want to put myself in a space that gives me peace, I still think of that free, unencumbered public space: a stone circle with no one in charge, no rules or cameras... it was free to the universe, free to the rain, the snow, and the people who touched it. I want our youth to know that they can go to a space, be safe, breathe fresh air, and just *be*. They need that. They deserve that. **EC**

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Academic Resilience in a Post-COVID World

A multi-level approach to capacity building

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BY LOUIS VOLANTE, DON KLINGER, AND JOE BARRETT

THE CLOSE COUPLING of content standards with standardized testing brought about by Margaret Thatcher's U.K. government in the late 1980s ushered in a new form of school accountability that has become the dominant education reform model used by industrialized governments around the world (Volante, 2012). Student performance on large-scale assessment measures are intended to hold school administrators and teachers accountable while also providing the "data" to spur system and school-level improvements. Indeed, every single Canadian province and territory administers and reports achievement in relation to these external provincial measures and also participates in varying degrees in prominent international tests such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) Programme in International Student Assessment (PISA).

The OECD, and PISA in particular, has increasingly exerted a pronounced influence in the governance of education systems both nationally and internationally and forced policymakers to grapple with consistent and recurring challenges, such as achievement gaps between different segments of their national and provincial student populations (Volante et al., 2018). One key achievement gap that is often reported is the difference between high and low socio-economic status (SES) groups. The OECD provides national profiles - which can also be

disaggregated at the provincial level - to indicate the differences in student achievement that exist between the most and least socioeconomically disadvantaged students. Countries that possess a higher relative share of low SES students who achieve well are said to have a more *academically resilient* population.

Redefining resilience in the face of COVID-19

As previously suggested, academic resilience is the notion that there are some students who achieve favourable achievement outcomes despite coming from lower SES backgrounds. Yet, to the average person, the word "resilient" means something quite different. Indeed, the Oxford dictionary defines resilience as "the ability of people or things to recover quickly after something unpleasant, such as shock, injury, etc." Clearly, the general notion of resilience is much broader than what is typically captured and often widely reported when discussing students and education systems. At the same time, the unprecedented and generational challenges presented by COVID-19 have provided an important impetus to reconsider how we support students in contemporary schools. It is highly likely that the pandemic has created even greater inequities with respect to students' access to learning resources and supports due to socio-economic factors. Further,



PHOTO: ISTOCK

the impact of these inequities will impact more than just academic outcomes.

The COVID-19 pandemic has underscored the growing necessity of broader notions of academic resilience that recognize important mental health as well as physical well-being concerns in children and adolescent populations – elements of resilience that are typically not captured by large-scale assessment measures. Rarely does a day go by without public recognition of the daily struggles students, particularly those from poorer households, are facing given the upheaval caused by school closures, social isolation, and familial economic losses – to name but a few factors. Certainly, federal resources such as the recently released *Guide to Student Mental Health During COVID-19* (Health Canada, 2020) underscores some of the growing challenges students are facing during the pandemic.

Canadian children may be facing an impending epidemic of mental health and general wellness struggles when the virus eventually subsides. For example, a pan-Canadian survey of the impact of the COVID pandemic on physical activity found less than 5 percent of children 5–11 years old and 0.6 percent of youth 12–17 years old were meeting required guidelines (Moore et al., 2020). Similarly, a recent study by the Hospital for Sick Children in Ontario found a staggering 67–70 percent of children/adolescents experienced deterioration in at least one of six mental health domains during the COVID-19 pandemic: depression, anxiety, irritability, attention, hyperactivity, and obsessions/compulsions (Cost et al., 2021). What steps should be taken by policymakers, district leaders and educators, and teacher educa-

tion institutions to help alleviate these challenges, both in the short and long term?

A multi-level approach to capacity building

There are scant examples within Canada where policymakers report on the overall mental health and/or physical well-being of their student populations. Although international and provincial metrics of student proficiency in such content areas as reading, mathematics, and science abound, measures of health and wellness are typically not reported in a consistent manner or given the same status in policy communities.

Perhaps the Health Behaviour in School-Aged Children (HBSC) survey can serve as a model for provincial/territorial education systems. The HBSC is a cross-national survey conducted in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO) that is administered every four years and focuses on the health and well-being of young people (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2020). This survey is administered in Canada to 11-, 13-, and 15-year-olds, and includes much broader aspects of health than those reported by large-scale assessments such as PISA. Provincial governments could develop a similar annual survey to provide more timely comparative data to inform policy directions during and after the pandemic. Ultimately, we need to provide and recognize markers of mental health and physical well-being with the same reverence that has been traditionally ascribed to student achievement measures.

In addition to policy reform considerations, building capacity for

more healthy schools will ultimately depend on effective leadership and teaching practices. On a national level, we see Physical and Health Education Canada's 2021-2024 strategic plan outline the organization's aim to emerge from COVID-19 with clearly defined intentions targeting pan-Canadian education efforts to improve the well-being of children and youth (Physical and Health Education Canada, 2021). The proposed efforts are wide-ranging and build on current (e.g. Schonert-Reichel & Williams, 2020) and former (e.g. Ontario Ministry of Education, 2017) provincial-territorial healthy schools policy and practice priorities targeting student well-being (i.e. development of national competencies, innovations, testing, sharing of best practices, and professional development). For their part, school districts across Canada will need to devote the necessary resources and provide appropriate professional development opportunities so that teachers are equipped to better identify and intervene in the worsening physical and mental health crisis that is facing Canadian education systems.

Now more than ever, congruent efforts to expand universal screening measures will need to be deployed to address these worrisome trends. Screening in elementary and secondary schools would primarily involve the completion of student questionnaires (American Psychological Association, 2020) – albeit with notable adaptations to account for the unique challenges encountered during distance learning and social isolation. Emerging from this pandemic era of education, measures considerate of academic, personal, physical, cultural, and social circumstances should be considered to promote greater understanding of the relationships between student success and student well-being. Such surveys in provincial and territorial education systems could complement the school climate surveys that many schools and districts already use, but with the necessary specificity to provide more granular data for specific student interventions. Just as governments around the world have echoed the importance of contact tracing to tackle the pandemic, district leaders and teachers will need timely data to help direct their resources and efforts to where they are needed most.

Lastly, any discussion on addressing mental health and physical well-being issues must include considerations for the education of future teachers. Pre-service education programs across Canada will need to continually evolve to ensure aspiring teachers are equipped with the latest pedagogical approaches in both face-to-face and distance learning environments. In addition to instructional time devoted to traditional subject-areas (i.e. language arts, mathematics, science, etc.) is a greater recognition of health and physical literacy, which are regarded as desired outcomes of health and physical education teaching, and important system and school health promotion goals to be achieved (Physical and Health Education Canada, 2021).

Indeed, the COVID-19 pandemic has illustrated with brute force that our traditional hierarchy of subjects, content knowledge, and associated skills are insufficient to “measure” the effectiveness of schools if we expect our students to thrive in a post-COVID world. Collectively, capacity building efforts geared at provincial policy reforms, districts and schools, and teacher education institutions represent a viable multi-level approach to strengthening the resilience of student populations. As one interesting example of a response to this growing need, New Zealand is developing a well-being curriculum that will be integrated across other curriculum streams.

From research to practice and practice to research

Given the novelty of the current circumstances facing teachers and school-aged children across Canada, there will be a need to research

and document the relative impact of different school structures and pedagogical approaches being utilized in online, blended, and socially distanced classroom learning environments. Understanding how these different structures and strategies interact and impact the most at-risk student populations will require an iterative process where recent research findings inform teaching and teaching informs subsequent research. This cyclical process is essential to establish a “best-practice” literature that policymakers and school leaders can draw upon to support their students in rapidly evolving school environments.

The effectiveness of these structures and approaches, and the impact of policies and programs utilized during the COVID-19 pandemic, must be rigorously researched and judged against a broader range of success criteria. Unfortunately, most of the current research in many international contexts appears to be focused on “learning loss” – which is essentially the examination of average drops in standardized test scores in different education systems during the pandemic (Kaffenberger, 2021). Yet virtually every school-based practitioner would acknowledge and echo the significant mental health and physical well-being “losses” that students are also experiencing. Certainly, it is possible for our education systems to attend to both the academic and mental health and physical wellness issues of Canadian youth to help build resilient schools. **EC**

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Bien-être des élèves en formation professionnelle

Rôle du sentiment d'efficacité personnelle du personnel enseignant

Nathalie Gagnon, Ph.D., est professeure agrégée et coordonnatrice de la formation pratique au Baccalauréat en enseignement professionnel de l'Université du Québec à Rimouski. Ses recherches se centrent principalement sur l'insertion professionnelle en enseignement, le sentiment d'efficacité personnelle des enseignants et l'accompagnement dans les milieux de formation.

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PAR NATHALIE GAGNON ET SYLVIE DECOUX

LONGTEMPS PERÇUE au Québec comme « la voie de la dernière chance » pour les élèves en difficulté, la formation professionnelle du secondaire, qui mène à la pratique d'un métier spécialisé, bénéficie aujourd'hui - et fort heureusement! - d'un regard plus positif. Selon de récentes études, une majorité d'apprenants et d'apprenantes qui évoluent au sein des différents programmes d'études de la formation professionnelle ne s'y retrouve pas à défaut de meilleures options de formation ou par manque de capacités à poursuivre des études plus avancées (Beaucher et Breton, 2020), mais dans bien des cas, parce que ce programme constitue, tout naturellement, la voie d'accès privilégiée au métier qu'ils rêvent d'exercer.

Néanmoins, et c'est tout aussi vrai pour l'ensemble des autres secteurs de formation, les parcours scolaires des élèves du professionnel ne se vivent pas toujours sans heurt et il arrive que la motivation, la persévérance et les processus d'apprentissage soient mis à rude épreuve. Une situation financière précaire, des obligations parentales rendant plus difficile la réalisation d'études, une problématique de santé physique ou mentale ou une faible estime de ses capacités de réussir sont autant de facteurs reconnus comme des freins potentiels à la réussite et au bien-être de ces élèves. La pandémie de COVID-19 aura malheureusement exacerbé plusieurs de ces défis vécus par les élèves de la formation professionnelle aux plans social, motivationnel et psychologique, en plus d'affecter la qualité de la formation qui, souvent, pouvait difficilement s'offrir dans une modalité d'enseignement à

distance ou en respectant les mesures sanitaires imposées par la santé publique.

Le contexte postpandémique actuel devrait ainsi inciter les centres de formation professionnelle (CFP) à réfléchir aux moyens de favoriser le bien-être de leurs élèves durement éprouvés durant les derniers mois. Car bien que les freins potentiels à la réussite et au bien-être nommés précédemment semblent à première vue relever davantage de la sphère personnelle que scolaire, il serait toutefois regrettable de sous-évaluer l'influence du rôle joué par l'école et ses différents acteurs (personnel enseignant, professionnels, membres de l'administration scolaire, etc.) sur le bien-être des élèves. En effet, l'école constitue un lieu de première importance dans la vie de ces derniers : espace déterminant au plan des processus de socialisation, jeunes et moins jeunes y développent leurs croyances personnelles et y façonnent une pluralité de buts éducatifs et professionnels. Sans surprise, les expériences vécues dans le cadre des études professionnelles et les contacts avec les membres du personnel enseignant sont ainsi susceptibles de jouer un rôle considérable dans la qualité de vie globale et le développement personnel de l'individu.

Lorsque le sentiment d'efficacité personnelle se substitue à la résignation

Les recherches sur le bien-être des élèves ont démontré le lien crucial entre le bien-être et le sentiment de contrôlabilité ressenti par l'élève envers sa réussite. L'exemple



qui suit en illustre les mécanismes : si une élève du programme de Secrétariat se sent complètement démunie et impuissante devant sa sixième tentative à réaliser un bilan financier avec le logiciel *Excel*, elle ressentira un niveau élevé de stress et aura tendance à se résigner, puis à abandonner la tâche sans tenter de mobiliser l'ensemble de ses compétences. Vécu de façon répétitive, ce sentiment de ne pas être en contrôle de sa réussite peut mener l'apprenant ou l'apprenante à ressentir des symptômes d'anxiété et de dépression qui influent ainsi sur sa santé physique et son bien-être psychologique. Déjà, dans les années 70, une étude réalisée par Seligman illustre bien ce phénomène de « résignation apprise ». Bien que cet exemple puisse sembler manquer de délicatesse pour décrire ce que vivent les élèves, il demeure toutefois utile de le détailler afin de comprendre le phénomène en question. Dans l'étude de Seligman, des chiens, emprisonnés dans une cage et sans possibilité de s'évader, reçoivent des chocs électriques. Si, lors des premières décharges, les pauvres animaux essaient de trouver une solution au problème et de s'échapper de la cage, au bout d'un certain temps, constatant qu'ils ne peuvent rien changer à leur sort, ils se résignent et finissent par se coucher

et attendre passivement le prochain choc. Le plus surprenant, c'est qu'une fois libérés de leur cage, ces chiens continuent de démontrer la même passivité et ce, même s'ils ont en réalité la possibilité de fuir. Malheureusement, à l'instar de ces chiens, les élèves peuvent aussi apprendre à se résigner, au fil des difficultés et des échecs vécus, s'ils ont le sentiment de n'avoir que peu de maîtrise sur leur environnement. Lorsque c'est le cas, la motivation scolaire et le bien-être s'en trouvent durement touchés et il est alors essentiel de leur démontrer qu'ils peuvent reprendre les rênes de leur réussite.

Le concept du sentiment d'efficacité personnelle (SEP), même s'il n'est pas nouveau, prend ici tout son sens. Contrairement au phénomène de *résignation apprise*, le SEP permet plutôt à l'élève de devenir un sujet actif de son développement et de s'engager pleinement et avec confiance dans ses apprentissages (Vianin, 2018). Défini par son créateur, l'illustre psychologue canadien Albert Bandura, comme l'ensemble des jugements et des croyances que possède un individu à propos de ses compétences, de ses ressources et de sa capacité à réaliser avec succès une tâche particulière, le SEP serait - rien de moins! - au fondement de la motivation, des accomplissements et du bien-être de l'être humain (Bandura, 2019). En agissant sur l'autorégulation des processus cognitifs, de la motivation ainsi que des états émotionnels de l'élève, l'efficacité personnelle perçue contribue fortement à sa performance et ce, quelles que soient ses aptitudes réelles! Si nous reprenons l'exemple mentionné précédemment en lien avec le programme d'études de Secrétariat, cela voudrait donc dire que deux élèves possédant des aptitudes absolument identiques pourraient avoir un rendement de niveau très différent lors de la réalisation de leur bilan financier en fonction de leurs croyances d'efficacité respectives. Ainsi, ce qu'il faut comprendre de la théorie du SEP de Bandura, c'est que pour réussir, il ne suffit donc pas d'être *capable*, mais encore

faut-il se croire capable! L'élève qui se *croit capable* s'engagera plus activement dans son travail et aura tendance à persévérer face aux difficultés plutôt que de baisser les bras, augmentant par le fait même ses chances de réussite.

Le rôle des croyances d'efficacité du personnel enseignant dans la construction du SEP des élèves et de leur bien-être.

S'il est important de cultiver des croyances d'efficacité positives chez les élèves afin de favoriser leur réussite et de promouvoir leur bien-être, il est tout aussi important d'assurer un fort SEP chez le personnel enseignant puisque ce qui est vrai pour l'élève l'est aussi pour celui ou celle qui l'accompagne! L'enseignant ou l'enseignante qui se *croit capable* s'engagera plus activement dans son travail et aura moins tendance à se résigner devant les défis rencontrés, augmentant ainsi ses chances de succès dans le cadre de ses différentes fonctions professionnelles.

Lorsque l'élève qui se croit capable est en plus accompagné d'un enseignant qui, lui aussi, se croit capable de le guider vers la réussite, le pouvoir du SEP s'en trouve alors décuplé...

C'est au cours des années 80 qu'un vif intérêt est développé pour le «sentiment d'efficacité du personnel enseignant» défini par Gibson et Dembo (1984) comme la croyance que possède un enseignant ou une enseignante en sa capacité d'influencer les apprentissages de ses élèves. Lorsque l'élève qui *se croit capable* est en plus accompagné d'une personne qui, elle aussi, *se croit capable* de le guider vers la réussite, le pouvoir du SEP s'en trouve alors décuplé, laissant présager un scénario des plus encourageants!

Fort de plusieurs décennies de recherche, le SEP du personnel enseignant a été maintes fois lié à la qualité des pratiques pédagogiques et des interventions en gestion de classe. En outre, l'enseignant ou l'enseignante ayant un SEP élevé s'avère plus susceptible d'adopter des pratiques novatrices et efficaces en cohérence avec les besoins de ses protégés. Certaines recherches ont même pu établir un lien entre de fortes croyances d'efficacité chez le personnel enseignant, la réussite des élèves dans certaines matières scolaires ainsi que leur motivation.

À la lumière de ce qui vient d'être énoncé, il n'est pas surprenant de constater que les croyances d'efficacité des enseignants et des enseignantes ont une incidence sur le bien-être des élèves. En effet, si un fort SEP leur permet d'exploiter leurs ressources efficacement et de les mettre au service des élèves, il influence également positivement la perception qu'ils se font de leur compétence et de leur savoir-être. Cela contribue à favoriser un climat de classe favorable donnant lieu à des interactions positives et significatives, assurant ainsi le bien-être, autant chez la personne enseignante que chez l'élève (Galand et Vanlede, 2004). En résumé, un SEP élevé chez le personnel enseignant favorisera l'utilisation de stratégies pédagogiques pertinentes et appropriées qui elles, auront un effet sur le SEP et par conséquent, sur la réussite et le bien-être des élèves qui, à leur tour, viendront alimenter les croyances d'efficacité de l'enseignant ou l'enseignante, accroître son bien-être et ainsi de suite, laissant deviner une

sorte d'engrenage circulaire qu'il importe de garder en mouvement!

Des stratégies au service du développement du SEP du personnel enseignant

En raison des liens considérables qui unissent le SEP du personnel enseignant et celui des élèves, il est crucial de se demander, en tant qu'enseignant et enseignante, de quelles façons il est possible de nourrir ces fameuses croyances d'efficacité. À ce sujet, une étude menée auprès de 22 nouveaux enseignants et enseignantes de la formation professionnelle nous donne des pistes de réponse. À partir de leur témoignage, quatre catégories de stratégies leur servant à maintenir et à développer leur SEP ont pu être identifiées. Peut-être sauront-elles inspirer et faire réfléchir les membres du personnel enseignant qui souhaitent accroître leur SEP et ainsi, favoriser le bien-être de leurs élèves!

Les stratégies de mobilisation de ressources

Les élèves qui évoluent aux côtés d'enseignants et d'enseignantes qui savent tirer profit du soutien et de l'expertise des différentes personnes qui les entourent se sentiront davantage épaulés et bénéficieront potentiellement d'un enseignement de meilleure qualité. Voici les principales stratégies de mobilisation de ressources relevées par les enseignantes et les enseignants consultés :

- Solliciter le soutien de ses pairs afin de bénéficier de leurs conseils et de leurs rétroactions par rapport à divers aspects de ses pratiques enseignantes
- Procéder à l'observation de l'enseignement de collègues expérimentés
- Faire appel aux différentes personnes-ressources de son CFP (conseiller pédagogique, orthopédagogue, travailleur social, etc.)
- Mobiliser son réseau professionnel de métier afin de bénéficier du soutien ponctuel de « spécialistes de terrain » pour des questions plus pointues (exemple : équipements spécifiques utilisés en industrie ou normes en vigueur dans les milieux de pratique)

Les stratégies relatives au travail du personnel enseignant

Certaines des stratégies utilisées par le personnel enseignant consulté renvoient directement aux actions mises en place dans leur enseignement. Comme elles permettent d'optimiser le choix et l'effet des stratégies d'enseignement-apprentissage et favorisent la différenciation pédagogique, elles sont indubitablement au service du bien-être de l'élève. Voici les trois stratégies principales notées par les participants et participantes :

- Bien planifier son enseignement afin d'anticiper les difficultés ou les imprévus, réfléchir à leurs solutions en amont de la période d'enseignement et assurer une bonne fluidité et continuité dans le processus d'enseignement-apprentissage
- Utiliser fréquemment l'évaluation formative pour valider l'efficacité des méthodes d'enseignement et d'apprentissage utilisées, obtenir des informations cruciales au sujet des besoins des élèves, orienter ses interventions futures et éviter les pertes de temps
- Instaurer et entretenir de bonnes relations avec les élèves afin de les connaître, de comprendre leurs défis et de leur apporter l'aide et le soutien dont ils ont besoin

Les stratégies relatives aux attitudes et au bien-être

Dans le but de se sentir efficaces dans leur vie professionnelle, plusieurs enseignants s'efforcent d'adopter des attitudes ou des comportements associés au bien-être. Voici quelques-unes des stratégies mentionnées par les personnes participantes à la recherche :

- Aborder ses tâches avec entrain et se centrer sur les aspects positifs de son travail, surtout dans les moments plus difficiles
- S'engager dans les tâches et la vie de son CFP afin de se sentir utile, valorisé et important (exemples : participation à des comités ou à des activités promotionnelles de son CFP)
- Pratiquer un sport ou un loisir que l'on affectionne particulièrement afin de maintenir un niveau d'énergie adéquat pour enseigner et préserver un équilibre entre sa vie personnelle et professionnelle

Les stratégies de développement professionnel

Afin de se sentir efficaces, les enseignants et enseignantes de l'étude ont également fait part de l'importance d'assurer leur perfectionnement professionnel. Les stratégies qu'ils ont répertoriées touchent autant l'aspect pédagogique que disciplinaire du travail enseignant :

- Suivre des formations et s'autoformer afin de rester près du métier enseigné et de mettre à jour ses connaissances
- Faire partie de regroupements stratégiques comme être membre d'un conseil d'administration d'une entreprise ou d'une association de métier, ce qui permet de « garder un pied sur le terrain »

Ces stratégies offrent l'occasion au personnel enseignant de demeurer à l'affût des changements et des nouveautés associés à leur champ d'expertise. En plus de garantir une formation de qualité répondant aux besoins du marché du travail, le fait de demeurer relativement près de son ancien univers de travail permet de mettre plus facilement en contact des employeurs potentiels et des élèves finissants. En ce sens, nul doute que ces stratégies influencent le bien-être des élèves!

En conclusion...

Le bien-être de l'élève est touché de près par le sentiment d'efficacité personnelle du personnel enseignant qui intervient auprès de lui. L'étude sur les croyances d'efficacité des nouveaux enseignants et enseignantes de la FP a permis de retenir quatre familles de stratégies utilisées par les enseignants du milieu de la formation professionnelle pour augmenter leur SEP. Précisons que ces stratégies peuvent servir plus largement à tout projet dans la communauté éducative s'intéressant au sentiment d'efficacité personnelle et peuvent inspirer tout particulièrement les enseignants et enseignantes à la recherche de moyens pour augmenter leur SEP et ce, quel que soit le niveau scolaire (primaire, secondaire, collégial, universitaire) dans lequel ils œuvrent. Mais peu importent les stratégies employées, gardons en tête que favoriser le développement du SEP du personnel enseignant aura des incidences non négligeables sur son bien-être et sur celui des élèves. **ÉC**

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Bien-être des tout-petits

*Par la voie des compétences sociales
et émotionnelles
du personnel enseignant?*

Marie-Andrée

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PAR MARIE-ANDRÉE PELLETIER

DANS LE CADRE de notre étude sur les besoins de formation des enseignants et enseignantes à l'éducation préscolaire réalisée en 2020-2021, les participants et participantes ont souligné l'importance de développer leurs propres compétences sociales et émotionnelles pour favoriser leur bien-être et celui des enfants. Nous avons alors ciblé des besoins spécifiques au développement de ces compétences et ainsi nous avons mis l'accent sur les contenus à aborder dans la formation initiale ou continue. Par exemple, des besoins de formation en vue d'assurer la sécurité émotionnelle des enfants ont émergé dans un contexte où l'affectif est essentiel à la relation avec les enfants de 4 ou 5 ans. Cet article amène donc des réflexions quant aux interventions en contexte scolaire qui favoriseraient le développement des compétences sociales et émotionnelles des enfants et qui contribueraient à leur bien-être.

Les compétences sociales et émotionnelles, de quoi parle-t-on?

Pouvant être définies comme des savoir-être acquis, enseignés et évalués et qui prédisent le bien-être

individuel et social (Minichiello, 2017), les compétences sociales et émotionnelles contribueraient à une relation de qualité avec les tout-petits (Coutu et Bouchard, 2019). Pour développer les compétences sociales et émotionnelles des enfants, l'enseignant doit donc les avoir développées lui-même. Faute de consensus sur une définition précise des compétences sociales et émotionnelles, nous proposons qu'elles touchent l'expression, la compréhension et la régulation de ses émotions et de celles des autres (Denham et Brown, 2010).

Comment contribuent-elles au bien-être des enfants ?

La promotion de ces compétences auprès des enfants peut prévenir l'apparition des difficultés liées à la santé mentale et les interventions concernant le développement de celles-ci sont efficaces dès la maternelle (Durlak et coll., 2011). En effet, la petite enfance représente une période où les enfants acquièrent les habiletés de base reliées aux émotions et ces dernières sont déterminantes pour leur adaptation sociale et scolaire future (Fredriksen et Rhodes, 2004).



Comme en témoigne une enseignante interrogée dans notre étude, pour développer les compétences sociales et émotionnelles des enfants et ainsi favoriser leur bien-être, il importe d'avoir une relation de qualité avec eux et de connaître avant tout le développement des enfants de leur âge. L'enseignante affirme qu'à 5-6 ans, les enfants n'ont pas tous les mots pour dire ce dont ils ont besoin et que ce sont des petites boules d'émotions : « On met la technicienne en éducation spécialisée là-dessus et c'est beau. On met un *plaster*, mais ça saigne toujours en dessous ». Elle ajoute que l'enseignant ou l'enseignante doit être conscient.e que c'est un être humain que l'on accueille.

Les compétences sociales et émotionnelles reposent effectivement sur la conscience de soi. En tant qu'adulte qui intervient auprès de l'enfant, il convient de considérer que nos réactions, nos paroles, nos gestes ont beaucoup d'impact sur les situations émotionnelles futures que vivra l'enfant. Il importe aussi de se questionner sur nos compétences sociales et émotionnelles en tant qu'intervenants et intervenantes, plus précisément quant à notre propre vocabulaire émotionnel. Comme en témoigne une autre enseignante, nos interventions face à des situations émotionnelles vécues chez les enfants

peuvent grandement influencer leur bien-être. Elle trouve que la sécurité émotionnelle, c'est-à-dire le bien-être des enfants, se sentir respecté et accepté par le personnel enseignant est tout aussi important que la sécurité physique. Elle ajoute qu'il importe que l'enfant puisse être accompagné par quelqu'un de fort, qui est à sa place, qui se sent bien et efficace pour accueillir tout ce qu'il est émotionnellement.

Quoi retenir des témoignages ?

On constate que les enfants de la maternelle n'ont pas nécessairement acquis le vocabulaire émotionnel qui leur permettrait d'exprimer ce qu'ils désirent ou ressentent. Verbaliser ses émotions n'est pas quelque chose qui apparaît spontanément chez les enfants. Il s'avère important de leur donner les outils pour mieux communiquer leurs émotions. Un enfant apprendra alors à utiliser des mots associés à ses états affectifs (Coutu et Bouchard, 2019), ce qui contribuera à son bien-être. De plus, il ne s'agit pas uniquement de recevoir l'expression émotionnelle, mais il faut aussi y répondre. Rimé (2009) soutient alors l'importance du réconfort non verbal (p.ex. poser la main sur le bras, s'en rapprocher physiquement). Il y a donc lieu de se questionner sur

la place de l'affectif dans cette relation avec les tout-petits sachant qu'en période de la COVID, des enseignants interrogés dans notre étude rapportaient ne pas pouvoir « toucher » aux enfants, même pour les consoler. Sachant que les enfants ont pu présenter pendant la pandémie des difficultés psychologiques comme la peur d'être infectés ou même la tristesse de ne pas être en contact avec leurs amis ou leur enseignant ou enseignante (Wang et coll., 2020), il convient plus que jamais de se rappeler de l'importance de les accompagner en leur apprenant à nommer leurs émotions (Carignan et coll., 2020).

C'est par le questionnement des adultes entourant les enfants qu'il sera possible d'amorcer un échange avec eux (Grossenbacher et Riva, 2018). Ainsi, l'enseignant ou l'enseignante doit leur faire reconnaître leurs propres émotions, ce qui est à la base des apprentissages socio-émotionnels. Puis, au fur et à mesure de leur développement, ce partage se fera plus spontanément. Il y aurait donc un apprentissage autour de la verbalisation des émotions et ces apprentissages se font par le soutien des adultes et les relations qui entourent l'enfant (Grossenbacher et Riva, 2018). Outre la qualité de la relation et le soutien de l'adulte, quels moyens peuvent alors être concrètement mis en place pour contribuer au développement des compétences sociales et émotionnelles des tout-petits?

...en période de la COVID, des enseignants interrogés dans notre étude rapportaient ne pas pouvoir « toucher » aux enfants, même pour les consoler..

Des pistes d'intervention

Voici quelques pistes d'intervention pour développer les compétences sociales et émotionnelles des enfants du préscolaire tout en contribuant à leur bien-être.

- Plus l'enfant développe une représentation positive de son corps, plus il ou elle sera en mesure d'exprimer ses besoins, ses désirs, ses émotions et ainsi de mieux interagir avec les autres (April et Charron, 2013). L'enseignant ou l'enseignante doit alors mettre à sa disposition un environnement sécuritaire et mettre en place des activités motrices et psychomotrices qui lui permettront d'observer, d'explorer, mais surtout de bouger librement.
- Plus l'enfant est exposé aux interactions dans la classe ou dans l'environnement extérieur de l'école par exemple, plus il ou elle vit des rivalités, des alliances, des compromis, des essais et erreurs, des partages d'intérêts et selon Denham et coll. (2007), c'est ce qui pose les bases du succès et du bonheur dans la vie adulte. Les jeux extérieurs sont alors très favorables au développement des compétences sociales et émotionnelles de l'enfant tout en contribuant également au maintien d'une bonne santé physique.
- Plus l'enfant vit des expériences de personnages littéraires par l'entremise des livres, plus il ou elle est amené.e à réfléchir et à mettre des mots sur ce qu'il ressent. Le fait de décrire des sensations physiques ressenties par des personnages ou des animaux lui permet de prendre conscience de ce qui se passe dans son propre

corps et ainsi d'associer cela à une émotion qu'il pourrait lui-même ressentir.

- Plus l'enfant partage des moments vécus et échange avec les autres, plus il ou elle développe ses compétences sociales et émotionnelles. Le fait d'amorcer des causeries à ce sujet et d'inviter les élèves à verbaliser la façon dont ils se sont sentis dans une situation vécue dans la classe par exemple, plus ils seront en mesure de mettre des mots sur leur état affectif à ce moment.

Conclusion

Les enseignants et enseignantes interrogés se disent préoccupés par la sécurité émotionnelle des tout-petits pour qui une relation de qualité est essentielle à leur développement. Ils reconnaissent d'ailleurs que leurs propres compétences sociales et émotionnelles s'avèrent essentielles pour contribuer non seulement au bien-être des enfants, mais aussi à leur propre bien-être. Dans le cadre de nos recherches actuelles, nous constatons qu'il existe peu de programmes de formation qui se concentrent sur le développement des compétences sociales et émotionnelles des futurs enseignants et même des enseignants en exercice. Nous avons ici présenté des besoins plus spécifiques au développement de ces compétences pour mieux outiller le personnel enseignant, mais également les personnes qui interviennent dans le cadre de la formation initiale ou même continue. Le personnel enseignant doit reconnaître ses propres forces et défis par rapport aux situations émotionnelles qui pourraient se vivre dans la classe. Un enseignant ou une enseignante qui ne se connaît pas émotionnellement de l'intérieur peut manquer de vigilance quant à son propre comportement (Latry, 2004). Reprenant les propos de Lacourse et Leroux (2016), il convient de se rappeler qu'un enfant de 4 ou 5 ans ne veut pas déplaire, mais il ou elle cherche peut-être plutôt à répondre à un besoin. **ÉC**

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Aborder l'agression sexuelle en classe

Au-delà de la peur



PHOTO : ISTOCK

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LE CHOIX de devenir enseignant ou enseignante est souvent motivé par un désir de faire une différence et d'être là pour nos élèves. Nous nous imaginons entourés d'enfants heureux en train de créer des projets de toutes sortes leur permettant de s'épanouir dans le plus grand bien-être. Tout de même réalistes, nous nous doutons bien qu'il puisse apparaître quelques nuages dans ce ciel bleu. Néanmoins, l'idée de devoir un jour parler d'agression sexuelle avec eux ou encore d'accueillir un dévoilement est alors à des années-lumière des raisons qui nous ont conduits là. Pourtant, depuis 2018, il incombe au personnel enseignant d'éduquer à la sexualité et, par le fait même, d'aborder la thématique de l'agression sexuelle et de la violence sexuelle en première, troisième et cinquième année du primaire ainsi qu'en deuxième et troisième (9^e et 10^e année) secondaire. Cette nouvelle tâche apporte son lot de stress et d'appréhension. C'est d'ailleurs le poids de ce devoir, mais surtout la peur de « devoir » qui fige le personnel enseignant lorsqu'il est question d'aborder la thématique de l'agression sexuelle à l'intérieur de l'éducation à la sexualité.

Un statu quo qui paralyse

Aborder ou non la thématique de l'agression sexuelle ne nous préservera pas d'avoir à y faire face à un moment

ou à un autre de notre carrière. Comme enseignant ou enseignante, nous sommes souvent aux premières loges des confidences de nos élèves, que ce soit pour les moments heureux comme l'arrivée d'un chien ou pour les situations plus délicates comme lorsqu'il est question de violence conjugale. L'importance du soutien des intervenants et intervenantes scolaires a d'ailleurs été démontrée au début de la pandémie lorsque les signalements ont connu une forte diminution¹ avec la fermeture des écoles, isolant encore plus les victimes et réduisant ainsi leurs possibilités d'appel à l'aide.

Au Canada, le taux d'agression sexuelle chez les mineurs est de 205 cas par 100 000 enfants et jeunes². Ce qui représente un peu plus de la moitié du nombre total des victimes d'agression sexuelle. En d'autres termes, croiser la route d'un élève victime d'agression sexuelle au cours de notre carrière n'est pas seulement une possibilité, c'est plutôt une forte probabilité. En revanche, il se peut très bien que vous ne le sachiez jamais. En effet, environ 5 % seulement des cas d'agression sexuelle sont dénoncés³, les victimes mineures choisissant souvent de garder le silence par peur, par loyauté, par honte ou par ignorance.

Le silence de l'enfant ne veut pas nécessairement dire que son agression ne laissera pas de pistes ou de traces.

Dans certains cas, la jeune victime vivra des conséquences qui se manifesteront soit en :

- symptômes de stress post-traumatique (cauchemars, comportements d'évitement, hypervigilance);
- symptômes d'anxiété (peur, nervosité, hypersensibilité);
- symptômes de dépression (difficulté à éprouver du plaisir), en comportements nuisibles;
- idées suicidaires;
- autres.

Ces indications s'avèrent souvent imperceptibles ou indécodables pour l'entourage du jeune. Ce n'est pas comme séparer des cercles parmi des carrés que l'on voit clairement devant soi. Comment y arriver lorsqu'on ignore l'existence des cercles? Comment entendre alors qu'on ne sait pas?

Mandaté sans outil

C'est à cette difficulté que bon nombre d'enseignants et d'enseignantes ont dû faire face en étant mandatés pour aborder la thématique de l'agression sexuelle avec leurs élèves. Une majorité s'est sentie démunie et terrorisée devant l'idée d'accueillir un dévoilement en pleine salle de classe. Non pas parce qu'ils ne veulent pas accompagner l'élève, non pas parce qu'ils ne considèrent pas cette prévention comme nécessaire, mais plutôt parce qu'ils ne se sentent pas suffisamment formés pour le faire adéquatement, et pour cause : Aucune procédure uniforme d'accueil d'un dévoilement n'est présentement accessible au Québec (et probablement dans la plupart des autres provinces canadiennes) pour les enseignants. Ces derniers doivent user de leur GBS (gros bon sens) et en matière d'agression sexuelle ce n'est pas suffisant.

Imaginons la situation suivante : Madame Douceur est une enseignante de 3^e année. En consultant le programme d'éducation à la sexualité, elle s'aperçoit qu'elle doit voir la thématique de l'agression sexuelle avec ses élèves. N'étant pas très à l'aise avec la thématique, elle décide de lire un peu sur le sujet et d'utiliser la littérature jeunesse comme amorce. Jusque-là, tout va bien.

Madame Douceur débute la lecture de l'album en prenant soin de faire interagir les élèves et de leur demander ce qu'ils feraient à la place du personnage. Les élèves sont intéressés et participent bien. C'est alors que Lucille lève la main et dit : « Moi aussi ça m'arrive quand je me fais garder ». Le cœur de madame Douceur arrête de battre, la crainte qu'elle avait au départ vient de se concrétiser... Comment gérer cette situation?

C'est ce genre d'images qui fait en sorte que plusieurs enseignants et enseignantes ont fait le choix de ne pas aborder la thématique de l'agression sexuelle avec leurs élèves. Ils ne se sentent pas aptes à le faire parce qu'il n'y a pas de ressources d'accompagnement à cet égard dans les centres de services. En Ontario, le personnel enseignant francophone a déjà eu accès à un gabarit de dialogue⁴ en cas de dévoilement. L'enseignant ou l'enseignante peut y voir des phrases toutes faites pour rassurer l'enfant. Le gabarit comprend également une description des signes physiques et psychologiques pouvant être détectés chez l'élève et même des conseils sur ce qu'il faut faire après la divulgation. Avoir accès à un tel outil permettrait au personnel enseignant de se sentir plus en contrôle lorsqu'il est question d'aborder la thématique de l'agression sexuelle et fournirait probablement l'assise nécessaire pour se lancer dans l'enseignement de cette thématique essentielle.

Un début de piste...

En attendant l'apparition d'un guide, il est quand même possible

de se former grâce aux organismes œuvrant dans le domaine. Plusieurs formations pour le personnel enseignant et d'interventions sont accessibles, que ce soit par la fondation Marie-Vincent, le réseau des CALACS ou encore des organismes comme Bulle et Baluchon à Sherbrooke. Des situations d'enseignement-apprentissage sont également offertes sur la plateforme Récit : <https://educationsexualite.recitdp.qc.ca/>.

Voici quelques éléments à garder en tête :

Rester calme

Comme lorsqu'un enfant tombe et nous regarde pour savoir s'il doit pleurer. L'enfant victime n'est pas toujours pleinement conscient de l'ampleur de la situation. Garder son calme et se poser pour entendre ce que l'enfant a à nous dire. Sans jugement, sans questions, sans essayer de prévoir la prochaine étape : être là, ici et maintenant.

Ne pas faire de promesses, ne pas questionner

Surtout éviter de faire des promesses qu'il nous est impossible de tenir. Rassurer l'enfant sur le fait qu'il a eu raison de parler, que ce n'est pas sa faute. Lui dire que nous le croyons, que nous allons nous assurer qu'il soit en sécurité. Le laisser parler, mais sans poser de questions l'amenant à préciser. Il faut éviter de contaminer son témoignage. Les questions, ce sont les intervenants et intervenantes qualifiés qui les poseront. Notre mandat c'est l'accueil, non l'investigation.

Après

Après avoir rassuré l'enfant, il est de notre devoir de signaler la situation à la direction de notre l'école ainsi qu'à la Direction de la protection de la jeunesse. De son côté, la direction a le mandat de chapeauter les intervenants scolaires. Notre rôle sera alors de faire le pont vers l'intervenant en transférant le lien de confiance.

Après la divulgation

Lorsque l'enfant est de retour dans notre classe et que des spécialistes en interventions s'occupent de son dossier, le laisser redevenir un élève et avoir accès autant que possible à la normalité. Il se peut que son contexte familial ait changé, qu'il vive des situations anormales comme celle d'aller témoigner ou encore qu'il soit retiré de son milieu. Sa classe sera peut-être alors son oasis lui permettant de s'échapper quelques heures de son quotidien plus complexe. Conserver la même façon de faire avec cet élève, la même façon de lui parler, de l'encadrer. La cohérence et la prévisibilité sont rassurantes pour un enfant.

N'oublions jamais qu'en tant qu'enseignant ou enseignante, nous avons une arme secrète, notre relation avec chacun de nos élèves. Si un élève nous choisit pour faire son dévoilement, c'est qu'il a confiance en nous. Ayons confiance en notre capacité d'écoute, de résolution de problèmes, de gestion. Il est toujours préférable d'intervenir même maladroitement que de fermer les yeux consciemment. L'impact à long terme d'un dévoilement non accueilli est bien plus grand et plus dommageable qu'une phrase malhabile. **ÉC**

NOTES

- 1 Allen, M. et Jaffray, B. (2020, juillet). *La pandémie de COVID-19 et ses répercussions sur les services aux victimes au Canada* (publication n° 45-28-0001). Statistique Canada. www150.statcan.gc.ca/m1/pub/45-28-0001/2020001/article/00065-fra.htm
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PHOTO : ISTOCK

Faire du bien-être de l'élève une priorité pour tous et toutes

Mais comment?

.....
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.....

PAR ZINA KHARCHI

L'ÉCOLE SE TROUVE être le milieu où l'élève passe la plupart de son temps. Ainsi, cet endroit s'avère une voie cruciale pour favoriser le bien-être des élèves, mais là n'est pas sa seule mission. Promouvoir le bien-être à l'école est une affaire dans laquelle interviennent plusieurs groupes de personnes : personnel enseignant, personnel administratif et même parents.

Débutant en fin 2019, la pandémie de COVID-19 que

nous suivions dans les médias partout dans le monde est vite devenue la réalité de la planète entière. Aux quatre coins du monde, la pandémie a bousculé le système d'éducation. La fermeture d'écoles à répétition et l'enseignement à distance ont quant à eux bouleversé le quotidien des élèves, des enseignant.e.s et du personnel scolaire qui devaient, chacun de leur côté, s'adapter à cette nouvelle réalité jusqu'à une date indéterminée.

Pour ce faire, plusieurs initiatives prometteuses ont vu le jour afin de permettre la continuité de l'école et des activités d'enseignement : réaménagement des espaces de cours; division des groupes d'élèves; formation à distance; planification des cours et adaptation des contenus; trousse d'enseignement à la maison, etc.

Par ailleurs, la pandémie a occasionné du stress et du mal-être généralisés sur la planète. La situation impose jusqu'à présent des ajustements pour chacun et chacune : télétravail, enseignement et apprentissage à distance, garde des enfants à la maison, licenciement d'employé.e.s, etc. Face à cette situation et à la pression vécue collectivement, le bien-être des personnes s'avère l'enjeu attirant l'attention particulièrement en milieu scolaire.

Adopter la psychologie positive pour comprendre le bien-être

Parler de bien-être semble corréler avec l'essor de la psychologie que l'on appelle positive, d'où les termes « science du bien-être » ou « champ d'investigation du bien-être » qu'on lui donne dans les écrits. Bien que l'idée de s'intéresser au positif remonte à plusieurs années, le courant est en émergence depuis une vingtaine d'années et, tout récemment, même si la fin de la pandémie de COVID-19 semble difficile à prédire, la psychologie positive post-pandémique semble gagner du terrain.

Considérant la psychologie comme une discipline ayant préconisé pendant longtemps le travail sur les faiblesses et les aspects négatifs de la personne, la psychologie positive met la lumière sur les aspects positifs de l'être humain et tout ce qui va bien chez lui (Gaucher, 2010). Elle va en effet à l'encontre de l'idée stipulant l'existence d'une psychologie totalement tournée vers les souffrances.

Pour bien comprendre les deux aspects liés à la psychologie positive, Gable et Haidt (2011) l'ont comparée à une médaille qui a deux côtés, soit un négatif et un positif. Cet exemple met en relief le fait que les personnes opérant dans ce champ reconnaissent entièrement l'existence d'aspects désagréables, mais sont attentives à l'autre côté prometteur de la médaille qui fonctionne bien. Plus concrètement, il s'agit de se tourner vers les personnes épanouies et qui ressentent de la joie au lieu de ne se préoccuper que de celles qui souffrent. Cela rejoint les propos de Lecomte (2014) selon lesquels le fait d'adopter la psychologie positive ne consiste pas à voir le monde avec des lunettes roses dans le sens où l'attention ne devrait pas être mise que sur ce qui est idéal et parfait.

Depuis quelques années, tant la communauté de la pratique que celle de la recherche ne cessent de s'intéresser à la question du bien-être à l'école en vue de promouvoir une santé mentale positive en milieu scolaire. On parle désormais d'éducation positive qu'on perçoit comme une approche fondée sur les compétences psychosociales des élèves autant que scolaires, considérant ces multiples avantages documentés dans les recherches comme susceptibles de promouvoir le bonheur, de favoriser la satisfaction à l'égard de la vie, de l'apprentissage, de la réussite, de la créativité et, à long terme, d'avoir une bonne santé physique. À titre d'exemple, il est admis que les enfants réussissent le mieux quand ils sont encouragés et reçoivent des compliments de leurs parents.

Comprendre la santé mentale dans une approche positive

L'Organisation mondiale de la Santé considère une bonne santé mentale comme un état de bien-être qui permet à la personne de surmonter les tensions quotidiennes de la vie, d'accomplir du bon travail et de servir sa collectivité. De fait, à n'importe quel moment, toute personne peut faire face à un élément perturbateur ou à une difficulté qui affecte son bien-être. La santé mentale peut être envisagée comme un continuum¹ de couleur à trois zones :

- La zone rouge, couleur qui signifie généralement l'urgence, englobe les problèmes de santé mentale les plus graves nommés « maladies mentales », comme la dépression, nécessitant une intervention dans la plupart des cas ou encore de la médication.
- La zone jaune reflète l'état de détresse ou de stress que peuvent occasionner les pressions normales de la vie quotidienne telles qu'un stress préexamen ou une simple dispute avec un(e) ami(e).
- La zone verte représente la situation la plus paisible, soit une bonne santé mentale se manifestant par des attitudes positives, de l'assurance et de l'estime de soi. Citant ici le cas d'un(e) élève épanoui(e) dans son entourage, qui participe aux activités parascolaires de son école ou l'élève confiant(e) qui prend souvent la parole en classe ou en groupe.

Ainsi, il semble que globalement les élèves passent à un moment ou à un autre en zone jaune et parviennent à regagner la zone verte par la suite. Cela dit, ils peuvent se trouver à un moment donné en période difficile qui s'avère généralement passagère du fait qu'ils arrivent à surmonter la situation et ressentent à nouveau du bien-être, processus qu'on nomme dans les écrits « l'adaptation » ou « l'ajustement ». Pour comprendre ces situations, il s'avère incontournable de se pencher sur ce qui a aidé l'élève à éprouver du bien-être par le biais d'une observation approfondie visant à démystifier les changements qui ont pu avoir lieu entre-temps. Plus spécifiquement, il s'agit de cibler les stratégies personnelles employées par l'élève pour traverser la situation stressante. À titre d'exemple, un élève pourrait se contenter d'évitement ou de repli sur soi pour oublier la situation et passer à autre chose alors qu'un autre pourrait demander l'aide de son enseignant ou enseignante ou de ses parents.

Quelques ressources prometteuses pour promouvoir le bien-être des élèves

D'après le conseil supérieur de l'éducation du Québec², les nombreux et sérieux facteurs impliqués dans la santé mentale exigeraient la planification de mesures comblant les différents domaines d'influence soit l'école, la collectivité, le/la jeune, ses camarades et sa famille tout au long du cheminement scolaire. Ainsi, écoles et / ou parents doivent trouver les meilleures façons de soutenir le bien-être des élèves. Pour ce faire, voici quelques pistes d'action :

Pour les écoles

- Utiliser la trousse de la santé mentale positive³ élaborée par le Consortium conjoint pancanadien pour les écoles en santé (CCES) qui est une bonne ressource pour la promotion de l'adoption de

...les personnes opérant dans ce champ reconnaissent entièrement l'existence d'aspects désagréables, mais sont attentives à l'autre côté prometteur de la médaille ...

pratiques et perspectives prometteuses en santé mentale positive à tous les niveaux scolaires. En effet, en plus d'informations pertinentes en la matière, la trousse renferme un outil dont les écoles peuvent se servir pour évaluer les pratiques tout en obtenant des stratégies personnalisées en vue d'améliorer la santé mentale dans les écoles au profit des élèves, du personnel enseignant et du personnel administratif.

- Créer des espaces de discussions entre les élèves permettant des échanges constructifs afin de chasser l'idée de stigmatisation de la maladie mentale largement documentée en recherche. Ceci afin de permettre à l'élève de demander de l'aide au besoin et surtout d'en parler quand il ne va pas bien.
- Soutenir le bien-être du personnel scolaire en vue de promouvoir celui des élèves. C'est d'ailleurs ce que reconnaît le ministère de l'Éducation en Ontario dans son guide « Vers un juste équilibre : pour promouvoir la santé mentale et le bien-être des élèves »⁴ qui peut être une bonne ressource à exploiter. Par ailleurs, « Favoriser le bien-être des élèves et des enseignants » un guide à l'intention du personnel scolaire élaboré par Papazian-Zohrabian et Mamprin est une autre ressource prometteuse en ce sens⁵.
- Avoir recours, pour plus de bien-être en classe, à la méditation de pleine conscience, laquelle s'avère une approche à la portée des enseignants et enseignantes. Le livre *Bien dans ma classe au quotidien grâce à la pleine conscience*, de Lehraus, K. et Stuckelberger-Grobéty, F. (2019), est un bon guide, particulièrement pour les enseignants du primaire.

Pour les familles et les écoles

- Miser sur des initiatives permettant le développement du sentiment d'efficacité personnelle (SEP) et la résilience des élèves. La recherche documente la corrélation du sentiment d'efficacité personnelle, perçu selon Bandura comme étant la conviction de la personne en sa capacité à accomplir une tâche donnée avec succès et la capacité de se rétablir après une difficulté et d'aller de l'avant malgré les embûches de la vie, et le bien-être des élèves. En outre, la résilience des élèves semble être un moyen non négligeable d'assurer le bien-être des élèves, et la trousse de la santé mentale positive citée plus haut explore davantage cet aspect en offrant différentes stratégies prometteuses en vue de favoriser la résilience des élèves.
- Mettre en œuvre des activités qui peuvent favoriser le sentiment de bien-être. Plusieurs études démontrent que se remémorer de bons souvenirs ou même se projeter positivement dans le futur

proche, par exemple, « voyager dans le temps » augmente le bien-être. À titre d'exemple, créer une boîte à souvenirs contenant des écrits comme des lettres ou d'autres objets facilitant le retour aux bons souvenirs et le fait d'anticiper chaque soir des éléments positifs du futur proche, comme le lendemain, s'avèrent être des pistes documentées dans les écrits.

- Favoriser la bienveillance chez les élèves par le biais d'activités ou de la promotion d'une bonne conduite. La recherche indique que la bienveillance constitue une voie gagnante pour promouvoir le sentiment de bien-être des élèves. En ce qui a trait aux activités, par exemple, le collège catholique « Mer Bleue » en Ontario a mis en œuvre des ateliers périodiques portant sur la bienveillance⁶. Au cours de ceux-ci, tous les mercredis, les élèves d'un même niveau travaillent avec le même enseignant ou la même enseignante pendant 75 minutes au développement de la confiance, de l'ouverture, de l'appartenance, de la stabilité et des relations saines et durables. En ce qui a trait à la promotion de bons comportements, le livre de Jane Nelson *La discipline positive : en famille, à l'école, comment éduquer avec fermeté et bienveillance* semble être une bonne ressource pour les parents et le personnel scolaire qui souhaitent adopter des méthodes d'éducation positives et aider l'enfant à s'épanouir en milieu familial et scolaire.
- Favoriser la création de pistes de dialogues entre l'école et les familles pour réfléchir aux meilleures façons de soutenir le bien-être.

Conclusion

Considérant le nombre grandissant d'initiatives et de pistes prometteuses en ce qui concerne le bien-être des élèves dont quelques-unes sont citées plus haut, l'école constitue un lieu clé pour assumer ce rôle. Surtout dans un contexte de pandémie, il devient de plus en plus urgent de se mobiliser pour favoriser le bien-être. Ainsi, il ressort que le bien-être est la priorité de tous mais surtout *la responsabilité* de tous. C'est donc en travaillant ensemble, familles et écoles, que nous pourrions envisager le bien-être de chacun, celui des élèves et de leur entourage. **ÉC**

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NOTES

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- 2 <https://cse.gouv.qc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/2019-03-la-sante-mentale-des-enfants-et-des-adolescents-1.pdf>
- 3 <https://wmaproducts.com/CCES/>
- 4 <http://edu.gov.on.ca/fre/document/reports/health.html>
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Exploration des technologies dans un contexte collaboratif et interdisciplinaire

*Source de créativité et de bien-être
pour chaque élève*

Viktor Freiman est professeur titulaire à la Faculté des sciences de l'éducation de l'Université de Moncton. Ses recherches portent sur l'enseignement des mathématiques, la résolution de problèmes, l'usage de technologies et l'actualisation du potentiel créatif de chaque élève dans un contexte interdisciplinaire.

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Jacob Lingley est directeur de la conception et de l'enseignement chez Labos créatifs. Il promeut la réalisation de projets créatifs pour les élèves à partir de matériaux divers et se dédie au soutien du personnel enseignant dans cette exploration riche et approfondie des disciplines STIM.

PAR VIKTOR FREIMAN, XAVIER ROBICHAUD ET JACOB LINGLEY

DANS L'OPTIQUE D'AMÉLIORER l'expérience scolaire de l'élève, nous nous sommes demandé s'il était possible d'explorer le potentiel créatif de chaque élève dans une salle de classe inclusive et équitable. Nos données de recherche avec les partenaires du Réseau CompeTI.CA (Compétences en TIC en Atlantique) semblent converger vers une réponse positive. Dans cet article, nous examinons les exemples provenant de deux études menées par l'équipe du Réseau : l'une, en partenariat avec *Labos Créatifs*, porte sur le développement de compétences numériques et l'autre, sur la créativité dans un contexte interdisciplinaire axé sur la musique, les mathématiques et la technologie. Ce projet soutenu par le Groupe d'action sur la Commission de l'école francophone (GACEF) a été réalisé en collaboration avec les districts scolaires du Nouveau-Brunswick dans trois écoles du Nord-Est et du Sud de la province.

Depuis les années 2000, une culture de laboratoires ouverts (*makerspace*), soit des espaces de fabrication équipés d'outils numériques, d'artefacts et de mécanismes de

toutes sortes mis en commun pour collaborer (Bosqué, 2015) s'implante dans les communautés en quête d'innovation sociale à travers le monde. Cette culture semble avoir donné une impulsion à de nouvelles pratiques pédagogiques susceptibles d'encourager la créativité dans un espace collaboratif et un contexte authentique, inclusif, équitable et socialement responsable (Lingley et Wong, 2020). Malheureusement freinées par la pandémie, ces nouvelles pratiques pédagogiques, en pleine croissance dans les écoles du Nouveau-Brunswick et d'autres provinces atlantiques, ont mis en évidence le potentiel transformateur de l'art, c'est-à-dire, une recherche par l'apprenant de nouveaux points de vue et de réflexions pour changer sa compréhension des choses (Mezirow, 1990). Ainsi, l'art permet à chacune et chacun de prendre conscience de son potentiel créatif dans une démarche de travail collectif et collaboratif (Tremblay, 2012; Robichaud et coll., 2016). De plus, selon Churchill, (2019, p. 68), l'éducation axée sur la culture et sur les arts ouvre la porte à une interaction dynamique et créative



entre l'enfant et le monde qui l'entoure lui permettant d'améliorer ses rapports sociaux, d'augmenter sa participation communautaire active et comme résultat, d'accroître son sentiment de bien-être.

En nous intéressant, dans ce texte, aux bénéfices potentiels de ces pratiques pour développer le goût d'apprendre ensemble, nous examinons quatre exemples de projets créatifs réalisés par des élèves entre 2017 et 2019 : un modèle réduit d'un village interactif, le Village *Minecraft*, la fabrication d'un *tubulum* et un spectacle de Noël 2.0.

Modèle réduit d'un village interactif

Le premier projet s'est déroulé dans une classe de 3^e année en immersion française dans une école rurale du Nord-Ouest du Nouveau-Brunswick. Accompagnés de leur enseignante et d'un mentor de Labos créatifs, les élèves ont réalisé un projet collectif de construction d'un modèle de leur village. En équipes, à l'aide de carton et de peinture, les élèves ont bâti de modèles de différents édifices de leur village. Ils ont également préparé une courte histoire qui décrit chaque édifice. Chaque histoire a été

audio-enregistrée par un groupe d'élèves. Ensuite, un autre groupe d'élèves a construit un circuit avec un interrupteur de courant intégré dans chaque modèle de bâtiment. Ils ont également effectué un codage associant le son (histoire de l'édifice) et le modèle. Ainsi, une personne qui veut visiter le village peut avoir une visite guidée programmée en écoutant chaque histoire créée par les élèves.

Lors de la visite de l'école par notre groupe de recherche, tous ces détails nous ont été expliqués par un groupe de trois élèves qui ont raconté leur histoire à succès de ce projet collectif en vantant leurs idées authentiques, leur joie de travailler ensemble sur un si gros projet, la force de chaque élève qui y a apporté son brin de créativité et aussi de la fierté de leur communauté.

Village *Minecraft*

Dans le second projet, un groupe d'élèves de 6^e, 7^e et 8^e année, égale-



Des élèves ajoutent une touche finale à leur édifice en carton

PHOTO : FOURNIES PAR LES AUTEURS



TOUT PHOTOS : FOURNIES PAR LES AUTEURS

Produit final : modèle réduit du village interactif

ment d'une école en milieu rural, a réalisé, dans un labo créatif, un projet de construction collaboratif de leur village à l'aide d'une plateforme virtuelle *Minecraft*. Tout comme leurs camarades de 3^e année dans l'exemple précédent, dans les entretiens avec les chercheurs, les élèves ont exprimé leur plaisir de travailler ensemble sur un projet complexe et signifiant. Le travail a exigé beaucoup de temps, de méticulosité et d'effort collaboratif. Une fois le modèle bâti, les élèves pouvaient utiliser leur imagination pour animer le village en créant des personnages et des aventures. Nous avons observé, tout au long de ce travail, les élèves discutant entre eux, se regroupant pour voir et commenter les trouvailles de leurs camarades de classe et pour s'entraider, contribuant ainsi au bien-être collectif.



Un élève assemble une maison de son village sur *Minecraft*

Fabrication d'un *tubulum*

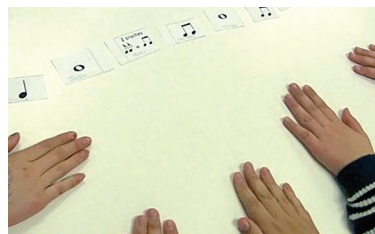
Le troisième projet a eu lieu dans le cadre d'une recherche interdisciplinaire incluant la musique, les mathématiques et la technologie. Deux groupes d'élèves de 7^e et 8^e année d'une école du Nord-Est du Nouveau-Brunswick, respectivement accompagnés par leur enseignant et une équipe de chercheurs, ont fabriqué collectivement un instrument de musique, un *tubulum* (marimba en tube de PVC) et son support en bois. Ce projet avait trois objectifs :

- intégrer des concepts mathématiques, tels que les fractions (pour chaque tube représentant une note de la gamme);
- intégrer la technologie en fabriquant le *tubulum* et son support;
- explorer les rythmes en créant des suites et de la régularité.

Lors des séances collectives pour concevoir le *tubulum*, les élèves en groupe-classe ont généré différentes

idées originales, posé des questions, écouté leurs camarades de classe et proposé des pistes de solution. Par la suite, en petits groupes de travail, les élèves ont mesuré chaque tube représentant une note de la gamme, et une équipe d'élèves-luthiers a construit le support en bois et y a apposé les tubes préalablement coupés et ordonnés. Afin d'explorer les rythmes en créant des suites et de la régularité, les élèves ont participé à un atelier de création sonore. À l'aide de cartes représentant des rythmes, ils

ont dû créer des patrons rythmiques de leur choix. La créativité dans cet espace collaboratif a été féconde. Pour accompagner leur patron rythmique, les élèves ont réalisé des chorégraphies soit avec leurs mains soit à l'aide de tubes plastiques, parfois même accompagnées de paroles. Les élèves ont confirmé avoir eu beaucoup de plaisir à créer et à faire de la musique avec leurs pairs; ils ont aussi dit avoir appris à tisser des liens entre la musique et les mathématiques tout en étant motivés par l'esprit collaboratif du projet.



Un groupe d'élèves joue la pièce de musique qu'ils ont composée avec des rythmes

Spectacle de Noël 2.0

Le dernier projet était un spectacle de Noël surnommé 2.0 d'une autre école du Nord-Est de la province. Ce projet, qui a demandé plusieurs mois de préparation, a été conçu à l'aide de technologies numériques par les élèves avec l'appui de leur enseignante de musique et de deux enseignants titulaires. L'un des numéros de ce spectacle a été entièrement conçu par une équipe de trois filles de 5^e année. Elles ont imaginé

une « bataille » de chant : une élève commencerait à chanter, mais ses deux amies, voulant chanter d'autres chansons, vont lui couper la parole à tour de rôle. À la fin, elles feront la paix et chanteront ensemble une chanson différente aimée par toutes les trois. Chaque chanson était représentée par une canne de Noël géante en carton que les trois élèves avaient fabriquée. Les chansons étaient sauvegardées dans un ordinateur et à l'aide du logiciel de programmation *Scratch* et du *Makey Makey*, une chanson s'activait lorsqu'une des élèves appuyait sur la canne appropriée. Le choix des chansons et du mode de présentation se sont faits en commun. Les élèves ont aussi cherché ensemble des solutions aux défis techniques posés par l'utilisation du numérique et ont vécu des moments d'émerveillement et de réussite.



Produit final : le *tubulum* avec son support

EN CONCLUSION, nous constatons que ces



Canne de Noël en carton
fabriquée par 3 élèves pour leur
numéro de spectacle

quatre exemples permettent d'inspirer une enseignante ou un enseignant qui cherche à multiplier les occasions d'épanouissement créatif pour le bien-être de chaque élève. Tout d'abord, lors de la réalisation de leurs projets collectifs, la participation de chacune et de chacun est un élément clé du succès : chaque élève y apporte quelque chose, son « grain de sel ». En reconnaissant l'expertise de toutes et de tous, tout le monde se sent valorisé, épanoui, donc bien dans sa peau. On s'appuie ainsi sur une force permettant à chaque élève de s'exprimer librement, ce qui crée un espace sécuritaire de collaboration, de partage et d'entraide (Freiman, 2020). Dans ce contexte de création mutuelle, le matériel est plus qu'un simple outil technologique qui aide à accomplir une tâche particulière; c'est plutôt un agent de libération de l'esprit créatif « in-situ » au moment présent lorsque tous les efforts réunis apportent quelque chose de nouveau, d'inédit; dans ce moment même, se matérialise une idée spontanée, qui n'émerge pas comme un savoir « transmis », culturellement plausible, mais plutôt comme un savoir « créé », nouveau, conçu collectivement et qui garde à la fois les empreintes de la créativité de chacun, de son identité, et de celles d'un groupe uni. Tout le monde qui a contribué s'y reconnaît, s'y identifie dans une joie et une fierté d'avoir créé quelque chose d'unique, une vraie œuvre commune. Dans cette dynamique inclusive, des liens communs se tissent par la créativité mettant en lumière

les forces créatives, parfois latentes, de chaque membre du groupe. En s'en inspirant, les éducatrices et éducateurs qui font face à toutes sortes de défis liés à la pandémie ou à d'autres obstacles peuvent-ils trouver dans ces moments créatifs, une lueur d'espoir positif d'un monde meilleur que leurs élèves sont en train de construire « dès le moment présent »? **ÉC**

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Produit final : Spectacle de Noël 2.0 devant un public composé de gens de la communauté

Effets de la COVID-19 sur le bien-être, l'anxiété et la motivation des élèves

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PAR MARION DESLANDES MARTINEAU, PATRICK CHARLAND ET ÉQUIPE¹

AU PRINTEMPS 2020, c'est plus d'un milliard et demi d'élèves dans le monde qui ont vu leur scolarisation interrompue en raison des mesures sanitaires liées à la crise de la COVID-19. Dès le début de la crise, l'UNESCO (2020) observait d'ailleurs déjà plusieurs conséquences majeures : réduction du filet de protection des enfants, exacerbation des inégalités sociales et éducatives, accès insuffisant aux technologies, stress sur les familles, etc. À ce jour, alors que la majorité des élèves ont pu retourner sur les bancs d'école, il demeure certain que l'année scolaire 2020-2021 s'est accompagnée de nombreux défis, et qu'on ne connaît pas encore la mesure des effets de la situation sur les acteurs de l'éducation.

C'est pourquoi la Chaire UNESCO de développement curriculaire (CUDC), en partenariat avec le ministère de l'Éducation du Québec, a lancé une étude visant à mieux comprendre les retombées potentielles de la crise de la COVID-19 sur les milieux scolaires au Québec. Plus spécifiquement, le projet vise à décrire les impacts de la COVID-19 sur : 1) l'organisation et les établissements scolaires; 2) les élèves; et 3) le personnel enseignant, ainsi qu'à croiser les données éducationnelles et épidémiologiques en cas d'éclosion dans les milieux scolaires.

Les résultats préliminaires présentés dans cet article concernent l'objectif 2 et proviennent des données recueillies par questionnaire en décembre 2020 et janvier 2021 auprès de 743 élèves du premier cycle du primaire au deuxième cycle du secondaire de trois Centres de services scolaires (CSS) de la grande région de Montréal.

Il est à noter que l'article se termine par des éléments de mesures qui pourraient être mises en place dans les milieux scolaires, à la lumière des résultats préliminaires d'abord présentés.

1. Ainsi, l'équipe de chercheurs s'est intéressée aux impacts de la COVID-19 ressentis par les élèves selon quatre dimensions particulières :
2. Inquiétudes en lien avec la COVID-19 (questionnaire maison) : Le niveau d'inquiétude des élèves est mesuré à l'aide de l'agrégation des niveaux d'inquiétude par rapport à diverses situations en lien avec la COVID-19, par exemple le fait d'être isolé des autres, ou la santé des membres de la famille ou d'autres proches.
3. Niveau d'anxiété et de dépression (Gresham *et al.*, 2011) : Cette dimension se traduit par des difficultés d'adaptation intériorisées, c'est-à-dire des comportements peu manifestes et inhibés qui sont plus difficiles à percevoir de l'extérieur que d'autres troubles de comportement. Plusieurs énoncés liés aux sentiments d'anxiété et de dépression permettent de la mesurer.
4. Motivation (Archambault *et al.*, 2010; Eccles et Wigfield, 1995) : Cette dimension comporte deux aspects complémentaires : la valeur accordée à la discipline scolaire (intérêt et perception de son utilité et de son importance) et les attentes de succès pour chacune (perception de compétence). Le questionnaire sonde les élèves sur leur motivation en mathématiques, en français et en sciences.



PHOTO : ISTOCK

5. Bien-être (Liddle *et al.*, 2015) : Il s'agit ici d'évaluer la fréquence à laquelle les élèves ont ressenti ou pensé certaines manifestations du bien-être, comme être de bonne humeur, être calme ou apprécier leurs journées.

Bien que l'étude soit toujours en cours, à la lueur des résultats préliminaires, des observations peuvent d'ores et déjà exprimer des tendances au sujet de certaines catégories d'élèves. Notamment, les élèves du deuxième cycle du secondaire et les élèves en situation de handicap ou avec des difficultés d'adaptation ou d'apprentissage (HDAA) semblent particulièrement vulnérables aux impacts de la COVID-19, alors que les filles et les garçons semblent vivre différemment ces impacts.

Les élèves du deuxième cycle²

Les résultats préliminaires montrent que les élèves du deuxième cycle du secondaire (environ 15-17 ans) sont particulièrement vulnérables en cette année scolaire singulière. De manière générale, ils sont les plus inquiets par rapport à la COVID-19, et le sont significativement plus que les élèves du troisième cycle du primaire (10-12 ans) et du premier cycle du secondaire (12-15 ans). De plus, alors que tous les élèves du secondaire ressentent généralement moins de bien-être que ceux du primaire, ce sont encore ceux du deuxième cycle qui se distinguent négativement. Ils rapportent le plus faible niveau de bien-être, en plus de rapporter de plus hauts niveaux d'anxiété et de dépression que tous les autres élèves. Finalement, les résultats préli-

minaires indiquent une tendance à la démotivation au secondaire en général et au deuxième cycle en particulier : ces élèves tendent donc à accorder moins de valeur à toutes les matières évaluées et à avoir moins d'attentes de succès.

Les élèves en situation de hdaa

Près d'un quart des participants vivent avec un trouble d'apprentissage ou une situation de handicap. Depuis le début de l'année, ils ont reçu diverses formes d'aide pour les soutenir dans leurs apprentissages (plan d'intervention adapté ou services d'un(e) spécialiste : orthopédagogue, enseignant(e)-ressource, psychologue, psychoéducateur, éducateur spécialisé, etc.). Les résultats préliminaires laissent entendre que les élèves en situation de HDAA ressentent systématiquement plus d'impacts négatifs que les élèves sans besoins particuliers, et ce, pour toutes les dimensions évaluées. Ils sont plus inquiets en lien avec la COVID-19 que leurs camarades, ressentent plus d'anxiété et de dépression, et moins de bien-être. Par ailleurs, ils sont moins motivés que les autres élèves tant en mathématiques qu'en français et en sciences. Ils constituent ainsi un deuxième groupe vulnérable (avec les élèves du deuxième cycle du secondaire) en raison des impacts de la pandémie sur les milieux scolaires. Considérant que ces élèves présentent davantage de besoins particuliers, il sera important de surveiller de près leur réponse et leur adaptation à la situation.

Les filles et les garçons

On compte parmi les élèves participants 52,6% de filles et 45,8% de

garçons, et on note qu'ils ressentent différemment les impacts de la COVID-19 (sauf pour ce qui est du bien-être scolaire, où il n'y a pas de différence significative liée au genre). Alors que les filles sont plus inquiètes et présentent plus de manifestations d'anxiété et de dépression que leurs camarades masculins, ceux-ci tendent à être moins motivés qu'elles en français et à accorder moins de valeur qu'elles aux mathématiques et aux sciences. Ces résultats ne sont guère surprenants : plusieurs études menées avant la pandémie dénotent une moins grande motivation chez les garçons et plus de difficultés d'adaptation intériorisées chez les filles (Graber, 2004; Bergeron, Valla, Smolla, Piché, Berthiaume et St-Georges, 2007; Réseau réussite Montréal, 2021).

Suite au projet

Puisque cette étude s'inscrit dans une perspective annuelle, une deuxième collecte de données par questionnaire a eu lieu en mai-juin 2021. Il est donc important de noter que ces résultats préliminaires doivent être considérés comme étant un point de comparaison pour les données subséquentes. De plus, pour permettre une perspective plus large et plus approfondie des impacts de la COVID-19 sur les milieux scolaires, les données de questionnaires (des élèves et des enseignants) issues des deux passations doivent être mises en relation avec des données tirées d'entrevues et de *groupes de discussion* avec des membres de l'administration, des directions d'écoles et des enseignant(e)s des CSS participants, ainsi qu'avec les résultats scolaires des élèves pour les années scolaires 2018-2019, 2019-2020 et 2020-2021. L'étude pourrait également se poursuivre dans les années scolaires subséquentes pour vérifier les impacts à plus long terme.

Quoi qu'il en soit, les élèves sont là et pour plusieurs leurs besoins sont criants, maintenant. À l'issue de l'étude, nous espérons que les résultats participeront à la mise en place de mesures d'aide adaptées pour les élèves, particulièrement pour les groupes les plus vulnérables. En effet, il existe déjà des initiatives qualifiées comme probantes pouvant être implantées sans réserve et sans délai. Ces mesures très concrètes peuvent aider l'ensemble des élèves sur les dimensions du bien-être, de la gestion du stress et du sentiment d'appartenance, et elles prédisent une meilleure adaptation socioémotionnelle. Par exemple, certaines mesures pourraient déjà s'insérer à l'intérieur du programme École en santé du ministère de l'Éducation au Québec. Premièrement, mettre en place une offre hautement bonifiée des activités parascolaires (sports, arts et culture) dites structurées dans l'ensemble des écoles (Archambault *et coll.*, 2019; Brière, Imbeault, Goldfield et Pagani, 2020). Ensuite, favoriser autant que possible les activités physiques extérieures, en commençant par une simple marche de 10 minutes (Brière, Yale-Soulière, Gonzalez-Sicilia, et al. 2018; Hunter, Gillespie et Yu-Pu Chen, 2019). Puis, pour favoriser la persévérance et la réussite scolaire des jeunes garçons du secondaire scolarisés en milieux défavorisés, des initiatives s'inspirant du programme *Bien dans mes baskets* semblent pertinentes (CREMIS, 2021). À cet égard, il faut cependant demeurer très prudents et rap-peler les risques de stéréotypes en ce qui concerne les interventions éducatives ciblant un genre en particulier.

Enfin, comme toute étude, celle-ci comporte ses limites. D'abord, le contexte de recherche difficile d'une situation de crise globale et sans précédent a rendu impossible l'établissement d'un portrait préalable de la population étudiée sur le plan des dimensions spécifiques évaluées. Ensuite, bien que des centaines d'élèves (et autres acteurs éducatifs) aient participé à l'étude, il n'en demeure pas moins qu'ils représentent un très faible pourcentage, non représentatif, de la population totale d'élèves québécois. Finalement, l'enquête ayant

été transmise par courriel, il est permis de croire que parmi les participants potentiels, ceux qui ont répondu à l'appel ont un profil commun : majoritairement francophones, ils font partie de familles organisées possédant une bonne connexion Internet. Nous posons alors l'hypothèse que le profil des participants ait pu biaiser les résultats. Ainsi, il est difficile de généraliser nos constats, et il demeure possible que la situation soit pire que ce que nous avons pu observer. **ÉC**

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- 2 Le 2^e cycle du secondaire dure trois ans et comprend la 3^e, la 4^e et la 5^e année du secondaire.

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**LES POLITIQUES DE RESTRUCTURATION
DES PROFESSIONS DE L'ÉDUCATION**
**Une mise en perspective internationale
et comparée**

*Par Louis Levasseur, Romuald Normand,
Min Liu, Luis Miguel Carvalho,
Dalida Andrade Oliveira*
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CE LIVRE TRAITE des réformes de l'éducation à l'échelle mondiale visant la modernisation et l'amélioration de la qualité de l'éducation. Ces réformes ont été influencées par les courants de pensée de la Nouvelle Gestion publique axée sur des principes de rationalisation, de performance, de reddition de comptes et sur l'importance accordée au savoir et au travail professionnel en éducation. Cette approche de gestion a provoqué une restructuration des rapports entre les décideurs et décideuses politiques et le monde de l'éducation.

Cet ouvrage apporte un éclairage riche sur la façon dont plusieurs pays se sont efforcés d'adopter une approche de gestion publique plus rationnelle, régulatrice et soucieuse d'assurer la qualité de l'éducation et de restructurer la profession enseignante pour atteindre leurs finalités.

Ce livre plonge les lecteurs et lectrices dans cette dynamique entre les instances décisionnelles politiques et les professionnel.le.s de l'éducation. Il présente la perspective et les motifs tant des responsables politiques que du personnel scolaire. Il décrit leur positionnement et rationalise leurs démarches et décisions selon leurs convictions et idéologies. Cette lecture invite à se demander comment un système d'éducation peut continuer à progresser sans réussir à créer la synergie souhaitée entre l'état et la profession enseignante. En effet, malgré les décisions politiques et la régulation, la profession enseignante a continué à se transformer sans toutefois être toujours cohérente avec les objectifs de l'État éducateur.

Cette lecture fait ressortir le rôle indispensable que l'OCDE joue pour appuyer les réformes éducatives et la refonte des professions de l'éducation à l'échelle internationale. Les activités de l'OCDE telles que les

évaluations internationales, les rapports de recherches et les cadres de pensée servent de référentiels sur le plan international pour développer des bases communes du savoir professionnel et pour influencer et appuyer les responsables des décisions politiques et éducatives.

Les responsables politiques ainsi que le monde de l'éducation bénéficieraient de la lecture de ce livre pour se familiariser avec les réformes éducatives à l'échelle internationale, comprendre les incidences du mode de gestion préconisé et cibler les meilleures pratiques politiques et éducatives susceptibles de gagner la confiance des citoyennes et citoyens en ce qui concerne la profession enseignante et la réussite des élèves.

Cette lecture nous a amenés à nous poser deux questions :

La pédagogie est-elle dominée par la tendance à rentabiliser les politiques et les normes qui indirectement nuisent au rendement des intervenant.e.s et à la réussite scolaire?

Est-ce que les nouveaux paradigmes des finalités de l'éducation pourraient mener à une vision internationale de celle-ci et à une approche de gestion plus concertées et cohérentes dans le but d'optimiser les effets du système d'éducation? **ÉC**

Bernard Roy possède plus de quarante ans d'expérience en éducation, ses domaines d'expertise sont la gestion des organisations performantes, de la gouvernance et de la planification stratégique.

A New Perspective on Educator Wellness

How are we setting the example of wellness for our students?

BY NICK MANN

Now, more than ever before, educator wellness is of the utmost importance – both for ourselves and for our students. We are dealing with a mental and physical health crisis on a global scale, and Canada is no exception:

- According to the World Population Review (2021), obesity rates in Canada are at 29.4% (11.5 million adults). That is almost one-third of educators if they are aligned with national rates. Obesity is defined as a body mass index of over 30.
- 40% of Canadians say their mental health has deteriorated since the onset of the pandemic (Canadian Mental Health Association & University of British Columbia, 2020).
- 70% of mental health problems have their onset during childhood or adolescence (Public Health Agency of Canada et al., 2006).
- Young people aged 15 to 24 are more likely to experience mental illness and/or substance use disorders than any other age group (Pearson et al., 2013).
- 34% of Ontario high-school students indicate a moderate to serious level of psycho-

logical distress (symptoms of anxiety and depression). Fourteen percent indicate a serious level of psychological distress (Boak et al., 2016).

- In 2016, suicide accounted for 19% of deaths among youth aged 10 to 14, 29% among youth aged 15 to 19, and 23% among young adults aged 20 to 24 (Statistics Canada, 2018).

In view of this reality, I think we can agree that it is past time that we start making some changes in how we approach wellness in education and the impact that staff wellness has on our students.

I recently had an educator reply to a

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<https://edcan.teacherfit.com> and
<https://schools.teacherfit.com/advocate>

tweet on the impact of educator mental and physical wellness on students with “School’s out. Students are at home. We’re crawling out of the abyss of a demoralizing year. We need examples, too. Besides, why are we always the first to be prompted to set this example, instead of the parents – where good modelling starts?”

While I agree that wellness examples should start at home, it is negligent to think that students are not looking to their educators to be the example of what mental, emotional, and physical wellness look like. Educators have chosen a path of impact and impact starts with being the right example.

A reactive and passive approach to our own health is missing the mark. So what needs to change?

1. We need to take a proactive approach to wellness. We need less talk and more action: less saying how important it is and more demonstrating its importance. This starts at the top with leaders making it a priority and demonstrating it to their staff.
2. We need to be willing to have the hard conversations with each other about how



we can improve ourselves through wellness and the steps we are taking to do so. Nothing gets better in darkness and silence.

3. Every educational professional, from district leaders to bus drivers, can start to build their own healthy and sustainable habits that demonstrate to students what mental and physical wellness look like. Additionally, if you are comfortable doing so, discuss your wellness journey with your students to deepen your connection and their understanding of health.

Now let's move to some actionable takeaways that you can use as an individual educator to start becoming more well and setting the example today. These actionable

takeaways will focus on building habits in four main pillars of wellness. Those four pillars are mindfulness and mental health, movement, nutrition, and sleep.

The concepts below will focus on building healthy habits and are taken from the book *Atomic Habits* by James Clear. I highly recommend his book if you want to make a healthy and sustainable lifestyle change.

MAKE HABITS OBVIOUS

Whether you want to start a mindfulness practice, increase your water intake or start exercising in the morning, you have to set yourself up for success by making daily habits obvious. Some examples of this would be keeping a water bottle on your desk so you always have access to water or setting

out your fitness clothes the night before so you are ready to take action before your long school day starts. Another great example for teachers and school leaders is to schedule your sleep and set an alarm to go to bed. Stop burning the midnight oil and prioritize sleep. As educators we must always focus on removing barriers to our wellness.

MAKE HABITS ATTRACTIVE AND FUN

Let's be honest, if hard things are not attractive and fun, we will struggle to sustain them. A way to do this would be habit stacking, the act of attaching a difficult habit with one that you enjoy. My favourite example of this is attaching my morning hydration to my coffee. I want to have my coffee on the way to

school, so to get it I must drink a large glass of water first. This automatically makes my hydration habit more attractive, because it allows me to have the thing I really want.

MAKE HABITS EASY

It is hard to do hard things, so make them easy. This is all about setting yourself up for success. Remove friction in finding time to be active or to practise mindfulness by scheduling it in your calendar and not allowing things to get in the way. Use technology to help you plan healthy meals, find great at-home workouts, or provide you with a daily breathing practice to calm your mind and prepare you for the day. Another great way to make habits easy as an educator is to grab a co-teacher and hold each other accountable. It is always easier to maintain a challenging habit if you have a friend to support you along your journey.

MAKE HABITS SATISFYING

It is human nature to strive to reach goals and to love being rewarded for meeting them.

Set small, realistic, and achievable goals and tie in rewards to them. A great example of this would be setting a walking goal for the month and if you achieve that goal, you get to buy yourself those new shoes you want. School and district leaders can create walking or wellness challenges and create rewards for their teams. Set goals, hold yourself accountable, and celebrate your success.

No change is easy; if it were it would already be done. As we make these changes on a large scale and at a personal level, we have to remember and be held accountable by the fact that we are not only doing this for ourselves, but for our students. We are in a time of crisis. Change is necessary, and whether we were prepared to accept the responsibility to be the example of mental, emotional, and physical wellness for our students or not, that has to be the new expectation of educator wellness.

Are you willing to be the example your students need to be mentally, emotionally, and physically well adults? ■

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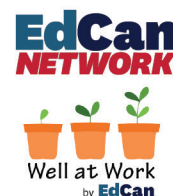
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Starting the School Year Right

Leveraging technology tools to build community in your classroom

Rachel Johnson is a passionate chemistry educator with over ten years of classroom experience, currently working as an Innovation Coach with the Halton District School Board. Rachel is also the co-host of **The EduGals** podcast: a podcast dedicated to helping support educators as they navigate technology in the classroom.

Katie Attwell is an enthusiastic educator to English learners, and is currently a Department Head and teacher with the Halton District School Board. She is also the co-host of **The EduGals** podcast: a podcast dedicated to helping support educators as they navigate technology in the classroom.

IF THERE IS ANYTHING that we have learned over the course of COVID-19 and the constant shifting from in-person to remote, etc., it's the importance of a positive classroom community. **This is established when all students feel valued, safe, and represented in their classroom, and students are actively taking risks and making mistakes.**

Every classroom is going to look different, because every teacher and student group is different; what works for one educator is not going to be the same for others – and that's OK! It's important to reflect on your strengths and what you bring to your own classroom, and build from there.

In an ideal world, face-to-face interactions are a key component to building community; students get to see and interact with their teacher and peers, and become comfortable in the classroom setting. The strategies we share below are meant to provide ideas on how you can leverage tech tools to support this class bonding.

Please remember that building community is not a one-and-done activity; it takes real effort and continuous commitment to build and foster positive relationships throughout the course of the school year.

The “why” of community building

Why is community so important? Classroom community is a fundamental building block upon which everything is

based. Positive relationships foster safe, inclusive, and effective learning environments.

First, a positive community encourages **communication**. Communication allows students to get comfortable with their peers, to build friendships, and to gain confidence using their voice in the classroom. It also allows students and teachers to communicate more openly about expectations, struggles, and how to improve.

From there, community leads to more effective **collaboration**. This is a skill that is important for students in all courses, but will also be important for their future.

Community also supports **social and emotional learning**. It's important for students to build healthy attitudes toward their self-identity, to learn how to manage their emotions and behaviours, and to develop a sense of empathy for themselves and others.

Finally, one of the most important reasons for building community is the creation of a **safe and inclusive learning environment**. By recognizing milestones and highlighting the many cultures and strengths in their classrooms, educators can create a space where students feel valued and able to share their ideas, their learning, etc., without feeling judged or ridiculed by their peers or teacher.

Technology tools to build community

Now let's talk about technology tools that you can use to support community building in your classroom. No matter which tools you choose, consider tools that allow students to see and/or hear you and each other. This helps students to connect with you as their teacher, and with their peers. Think of the saying “a picture is worth a thousand words” – when you include yourself in a video, students can see facial expressions and hear intonation, without having to interpret that from text only.

Be sure to protect students and their identities. Check privacy policies, and try to avoid having students use tools that gather a lot of personal data. If your board has rules about technology use for students, make sure that you are verifying each tool to ensure students are protected.

Please note that there are many different tools that are quite similar. We have included tools that we use regularly.

Screencasting tools

You can record a combination of voice, screen, and/or webcam. Tools include Screencastify, Loom, Explain Everything, Screencast-o-matic, and WeVideo.

Teacher uses:

- Weekly/daily overview video of learning goals
- Record instructions for assignments/tasks
- Exemplars
- Video reply to an email

- Answer student questions using video
- Video or voice feedback
- GIFs for personalized feedback and/or instructions

Student uses:

- Show steps to solve a problem or justify a response
- Reflect on learning
- Scaffold the traditional presentation
- Crowd source videos to create a class resource

Audio recording tools

These tools allow you to record audio notes in Google Workspace (Docs, Slides, Forms, Gmail) and beyond. You can achieve this with Mote and Google Read&Write's Voice Comment feature.

Teacher uses:

- Audio feedback
- Audio message via email
- Add transcript of audio recording
- Option to translate transcript
- Record audio instructions for assignments/tasks

Student uses:

- Short audio clips of how to pronounce their name
- Insert audio into slides
- Peer editing/feedback

Chat tools

Real-time messaging apps are more similar to the way that students communicate in real life. Tools include Remind, Slack, Discord, Google Chat or the chat feature built into your LMS.

Teacher uses:

- Individual check-ins/feedback
- Class messages using groups or rooms
- Getting-to-know-you questions
- Chat for asynchronous or synchronous learning

Student uses:

- Collaboration on tasks
- Social connection
- Ask questions without feeling self-conscious
- More low-risk way to communicate with teacher

Collaborative workspaces

These are collaborative tools that can be leveraged in the classroom. Examples of these tools are Microsoft (Office) 365 (Word, PowerPoint) and Google Workspace (Docs,

Slides, Drawings).

Teacher uses:

- Hyperdocs
- Create feedback stickers using Bitmoji
- Create GIFs using Slides
- Create team games or resources

Student uses:

- Collaborate on tasks or projects
- Peer editing/feedback
- Crowd source to create a class resource



Survey/quizzing tools

These tools can be used to gather information. Surveys can be created using a variety of tools, such as Microsoft Forms, Survey Monkey, and Google Forms.

Teacher uses:

- Getting-to-know-you surveys
- Social-emotional check-ins
- Curating favourite songs, topics, etc. to be used in class
- Student feedback
- Student questions

Interactive whiteboards

This is a great tool for collaborating in real time. Similar tools include: Google Jamboard, whiteboard.fi, whiteboard.chat, as well as the Microsoft Whiteboard.

Teacher uses:

- Activities to get to know students
 - This or That
 - Would You Rather
 - Yay or Nay
 - Four Corners
- Interactive games (a quick browser search will bring up lots of templates – find one that works for you!)
 - Pictionary
 - Scavenger hunts

- Boggle
- Connect Four

Student uses:

- Whole class word walls
- Team brainstorming

Video conferencing tools

Video conferencing tools have become a staple in virtual classrooms. Take advantage of additional features within these tools such as polls, Q&A, and breakout rooms to build your classroom community.

Teacher uses:

- Use students' names as they enter
- Breakout rooms for individual student feedback
- Use with OBS (open broadcaster software)
- Co-construct classroom norms
- Drop-in for extra help

Class uses:

- Breakout rooms for group work
- Q&A feature
- Polling
- Waterfall answers in chat box
- Social time

Learning management systems (LMS)

An LMS is a centralized hub where students can access content, submit assignments, and more. Examples of an LMS are: Google Classroom, Brightspace by D2L, Schoology, Canvas, etc.

Teacher uses:

- Embed a welcome video message on homepage
- Collaborate with students to create a layout that works for everyone
- Co-create a custom banner with your class
- Create a space for students to easily communicate with teacher and peers
- Game or activity for students to learn the LMS
- Use language that is inclusive for all students

As you start off your school year, remember that community building does not happen overnight. Teachers must continue to make an effort throughout the course or school year to ensure that all students feel safe and comfortable in the classroom. Taking just a few minutes every day can lead to positive student outcomes, as well as stronger and more positive student-teacher relationships. **EC**

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BY JEFF FITTON

“I Believe in You”

The Rosenthal Effect in schools

Jeff Fitton is a passionate teacher who believes in the infinite capacity of his students and seeks to create innovative educational experiences. He is also a loving father and husband who enjoys reading, the outdoors, and volunteering.

“FITTON, YOU BABY.”

I can still remember the nasal voice and twitchy mustache of my Grade 9 wrestling coach as he derided me, and the way he emphasized the luscious double “B” in “baby.” I’d arrived at wrestling practice sick, knowing how important it was to my coach that we attend regularly for the team. I’d asked woosily if I could watch practice from the bleachers.

I wish I could tell you that his words inspired my immune system to leap into action and triumph like the Miracle at Dunkirk. Instead, I felt gutted. His infectious words meant that within the year, I’d quit the wrestling team. Twenty-three years later, his words served as a powerful inoculation against the use of negative

semantics in my own classroom.

Many people can vividly remember their own short but powerful instance of a time when someone believed in them – or not. Maya Angelou’s wisdom is visceral: “At the end of the day people won’t remember what you said or did, they will remember how you made them feel.”

Lighting the fire

One October staff meeting, our admin team presented a graph that became the reason I get out of bed each day. As the data appeared on a PowerPoint, our principal congratulated us on the results of the previous year’s Ministry of Education Learning Survey of students at our school. He pointed out that when asked “How many adults at your school care about you?” 69 percent of our students reported, “Two adults or more.”

A few staff members stifled a yawn; others finished their grading. Sedation washed over the faculty like the warm hug of a narcotic – but my reaction was volcanic.

A good news story? I felt angry. Worse: ashamed. Nearly one in three – 162 kids – were walking through our front doors feeling that hardly any adults in the school cared about them. That’s five to six full classrooms of students disconnected from adults, possibly for four years

of their academic experience. That’s not education. That’s a prison sentence.

But the data was a call to action.

In 2021, the survey is asking a new question: “Are there two adults in the building who **believe** you will be a success in life?” Linda Kaser and Judy Halbert, two professors from the University of British Columbia, had urged our district to explore this question. It’s a subtle but seismic semantic shift: Adults can care about a person and not believe in them. Belief is related to “care” and “connection,” but is something akin to a combination of both on steroids. It’s a three-for-one deal!

Using psychology as a catalyst for change

In *Give and Take*, Adam Grant reminds readers of the Rosenthal Experiment. Elementary teachers were told by Harvard researchers Rosenthal and Jacobsen that they had a class with several “Bloomers.” These were students who could make 15 to 20 percent gains in achievement during the year.

It was a ruse. But as a result, the teachers developed a mindset where they believed in their students. Then the magic happened. When teachers thought their students had high potential, their teaching methods and approach ensured that the kids made significant academic gains. Interestingly, the research was replicated by Dov Eden in the Israeli military. As Adam Grant (2013) reports, these “high potential” students and soldiers were viewed by their instructors differently. When they made mistakes, their instructors believed they simply needed coaching or had made an error that was not indicative of incompetence. Teachers were generally warmer and spent more time with these identified pupils.

The power of the self-fulfilling prophecy – the Rosenthal Effect – should be revisited in our schools. As a best practice, schools would encourage teachers to consciously adopt the mindset that all students have high potential. Indeed, this paradigm shift is championed in Kaser and Halbert’s *Spirals of Inquiry*, by George Couros in *The Innovator’s Mindset*, and by Adam Grant in *Think Again*. Ultimately, their ideas around education seem to distill into creating meaningful relationships with students that demonstrate that their teachers believe in them.

The shift to believing in kids can have a 15 to 20 percent positive impact on students academically. Isn’t it time that we educators applied it with efficacy and intentionality? Without duping faculty, could schools adopt the Rosenthal Effect mindset consciously? Let’s work together to create a self-fulfilling prophecy that will positively alter the experiences and lives of our students! Today, will you consciously find something to nurture and believe in, with every student you teach? **EC**

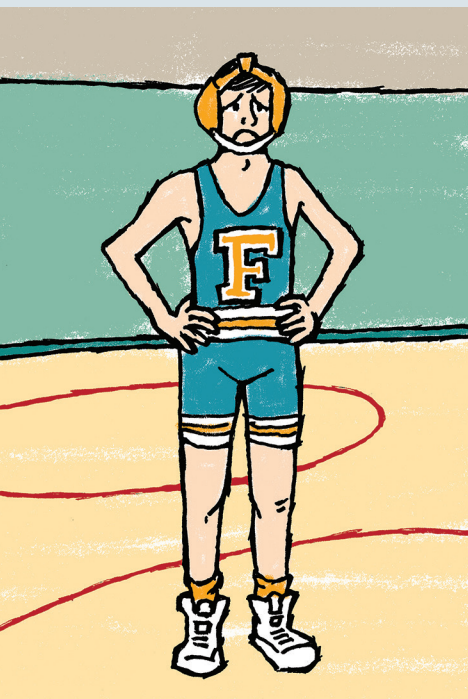


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